

# TESL NS Newsletter

## Table of Contents

### page

1	Editorial
2	TESL NB Conference
3	NS Immigration Partnership Conference
3	MISA Volunteers
4	Student Writing
5	David's Websites
5	"Spring Renewal" by Kevin Landry
6	Message from UBC



### Editorial

*The sun was warm but the wind was chill.  
You know how it is with an April day  
When the sun is out and the wind is still,  
You're one month on in the middle of May.  
But if you so much as dare to speak,  
A cloud comes over the sunlit arch,  
A wind comes off a frozen peak,  
And you're two months back in the middle of  
March.*

-- Robert Frost

Hello Everyone!

In a speaking class today, we talked about ways to open a conversation. After much to and fro, my students agreed that things people have in common are always good for opening a conversation - class levels, for them, teachers, residences, tuition/rental fees, late buses, and prices of commodities. If all else failed, they argued, there was always - the weather!

I remembered this when, casting about for an opener to my editorial, all else seemed to fail me, and so here I am using the weather as my opener. Yes, folks, the too-long winter seems finally to be on its way out and spring on its way in. True, given the vagaries of Nova Scotia weather, it may

be too soon for us to mothball our winter clothes. What Robert Frost says so beautifully about New England weather could very well be said of our Nova Scotia weather. But the daffodils are out and today was a glorious day. The lawns in front of our houses are turning green. I put my bets on May.

As you will see, we have had some interesting contributions for this Spring issue. Thank you, contributors. But there have not been enough contributions for us to do what we had hoped to do - divide the newsletter into several sections according to subject areas and/or themes. Hopefully there will be more for the next issue. We can only "print" what we receive from you, the reader-contributors.

I would like something like TEACHING AGAINST THE GRAIN to be the theme of our summer issue - what we can do for our students in addition to teaching them what they come for. Any comments, any suggestions? Please write back.

All right, we had - and survived - chocolates of all shapes, from hearts to rabbits, and now Mother's Day is only days away. Happy, happy mother's day to all the mothers among you who will read this newsletter and to you teachers and administrators, who are oftentimes more "mother" to the students than their real mothers. You deserve much more than mere chocolates and long-stemmed roses. Kudos to you!

With a sincere wish for good health and world peace, I "depart" to continue preparing for my classes. May the contributions for our next newsletter be as numerous as the daffodils, and as bright. Adieu.

-- Fe Leonor, Newsletter Editor

**TESL NS at TESL NB  
Saint John, NB April 25-26, 2003**

Three members of TESL NS attended the TESL NB conference: Maureen Sargent, Sandee Thompson, and Ellen Pilon. The Conference was a great success with attendees not only from New Brunswick, but also from Nova Scotia, PEI, Newfoundland, and Quebec.

On Friday evening Maureen gave the Plenary Address on "Diverse Classrooms, Diverse Learners: Individual Factors Affecting Success in Second Language Classrooms." On Saturday she gave a workshop on Evaluating Content-based EAP Materials and Sandee gave a workshop on Inductive Learning and Student Autonomy. Both workshops were popular with conference attendees.

In her Plenary Address, Maureen discussed individual differences in acquiring L2. What makes learners so diverse? She focused on four variables: aptitude, motivation, attitude and cognitive learning styles.



**APTITUDE:** Language learning aptitude is the single best predictor of language learning success. Probably the learner is born with this aptitude. There are three kinds of aptitude: analytic (grammar and rules), memory-oriented (functions and communication), and neither (analytic and memory are equal). Strategies to assist students with lower aptitude include creating a supportive classroom atmosphere, determining what is most challenging for the student, teaching in manageable chunks, and using visuals

**MOTIVATION:** This is the second predictor of success in learning. Maureen referred to the Integrative and Instrumental motivation theories of Robert Gardner, suggesting that the former is stronger in ESL and the latter in EFL situations. Teachers can help motivate students in many ways, such as creating a comfortable classroom, and defining objectives for the learners. Be sure

the learners understand how they can use the language outside the classroom. Tasks shouldn't be too easy, nor too difficult.

**ATTITUDE:** This is the student's feeling about the target language and its speakers. Attitude to a student's own culture and language is also important. Both affect the learning of L2. Integration is the ideal, where both languages and cultures exist harmoniously side by side.

**LEARNING STYLES:** Maureen referred to Rebecca Oxford's five major dimensions of L2 learning styles. These include analytic versus global (the trees or forest idea), and sensory preferences such as visual, auditory, or hands-on styles. Many Asians can be visual learners, whereas often Latins are auditory learners. The longer students are residents in the United States, the more auditory-oriented they become. Third is intuitive/random (abstract, non-sequential ways) versus concrete/sequential. Fourth, openness versus closure, where the latter requires organization and results. Finally, introverted versus extroverted, where the former is energized by one's own ideas, feelings and thoughts and the latter derives energy from other people and events.

Maureen recommended that to satisfy the different learning styles, teachers should have detailed instructions but be flexible; give the analytic students time to answer but encourage spontaneity, balance cooperative with competitive games and activities, and try to include multi-sensory activities.

-- Ellen Pilon

**NOVA SCOTIA IMMIGRATION  
PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE****April 2003**

Immigration partners recently gathered in Halifax to identify practical and concerted approaches to attracting, integrating and retaining Nova Scotia immigrants. Over 100 representatives from government, the private sector and not for profit groups shared their ideas, experiences and insights at the Nova Scotia Immigration Partnership Conference 2003: Opportunities for Collaboration.

The number of immigrants to Nova Scotia has dropped by more than half in recent years from 2900 in 1996 to 1400 in 2001. In addition 62% of those who came during the last ten years left the province. Atlantic Canada accounts for about 7.5% of Canada's total population but receives only 1.2% of the immigrants to Canada.

Government research indicates that net migration will play an increasingly important role in population and labour market growth in Canada and the Atlantic Region. The Atlantic Provinces Economic Council (APEC) projects that national immigration needs will substantially exceed existing annual immigration targets within five years.

The conference provided the opportunity for collaboration amongst stakeholders in the area of immigration to Nova Scotia. Specific issues that were discussed included: strategies to attract immigrants to Nova Scotia, ensuring the social and economic well-being of immigrants, the role and importance of ESL, economic integration and social integration.

Background papers on the above issues, together with information on immigration statistics and demographics may be obtained from:

<http://www.misa.ns.ca/> and then click on **Nova Scotia Immigration Partnerships**.

-- *Gerry Mills*

**FOR THE NOVEMBER 2002 TESL NS  
CONFERENCE, TWO MISA VOLUNTEERS  
WERE SPONSORED. HERE ARE THEIR  
REPORTS****1. From MISA Volunteer Keith Freeman**

I was invited to attend the Annual TESL NS Conference in November as a representative of the Metro Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA). I have been a volunteer with MISA for two years now and was excited to attend the conference to meet with ESL professionals and try to pick up some new ideas - this is always a good thing.

The conference theme was "A Matter of Words". The two keynote speakers, Dr. Horst and Dr. Cobb, presented very interesting information that was beneficial to helping us understand our students even more. Dr. Horst spoke about how extensive reading is key to acquiring new vocabulary. The presentation was well presented and very enjoyable for a Friday night.

My personal favorite seminar was presented by Marlene Piontek hailing from Frontier College. When teaching you can sometimes get bogged down in the information and not remember to make it fun and interactive. Ms. Piontek changed all that. In one exercise she gave us all a penny and asked us to tell something to the group that happened to them in that year. It was a great ice-breaker for the whole room. Another activity was attempting to remember everything in your wallet and then writing it down on a piece of paper. After this we asked each other questions about the pieces of information in the wallet (anything that wasn't too personal). These activities presented endless learning opportunities in a fun and enjoyable way.

For me the conference was an opportunity to meet and greet ESL professionals, learn a few new ways of doing the "same old thing", and have a good time. All of these expectations were met and exceeded.

## 2. *From MISA Volunteer Sherri McFadgen.*

I think, for me, the TESL Conference simplified my approach to tutoring. Prior to the conference, I had no formal education on the process of tutoring except for the seminars I attended at MISA. When I got a tutor assignment, my goals were quite lofty to say the least! I wanted to teach everything and anything to my student. I soon realized that the students had specific needs that had to be addressed, and my need to be the all-around tutor came second. Basic information became the most important – but how do I present that information to a Level 2 student for example, in a way they would understand and how would I gauge their understanding? Marlene Pointek from Frontier College introduced me to a simplified, but extremely effective way of doing things. For example, asking a student about what they carry in their purse or backpack. These types of questions lead to numerous other topics that affect our students in their everyday life- bus passes (directions, landmarks, schools, etc), money (banks, savings, taxes, etc), keys(cars, homes), etc. Passing a penny to a student and asking what happened to them in the year the penny was made is always a hit and well received.

I've since incorporated some of her techniques in my tutoring sessions and found them to be effective and sometimes quite amusing. Vocabulary building is always an issue with my students and Dr.Horst's seminar offered new insights and again, a simplified approach- collocation bingo for example. There are so many resources available to a tutor that it is sometimes overwhelming, but I've found what works the best for me is to listen first and then ask questions. My students guide my teaching for me, whether it's grammar, pronunciation or just a chat between new friends about topics of interest, there is always something to talk about! I've also learned that our sessions may start out in a planned fashion, but rarely stay on course and that's okay. The most important thing is effective communication between the tutor and the student and a strong desire to learn on both sides.

## ***A STORY WRITTEN BY AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE INSTITUTE STUDENT***

A Modern Cinderella....

Once upon a time, a girl went to an international language institute in Halifax to learn English. She didn't want to go...her parents said she had to go.



Her family was very, very rich. They had a castle in Japan and they wanted that the girl improve to become a doctor. She was very sad because her dream was to become a fisher girl! In Halifax, she always went after the school to the sea to go fishing.

One day, she lost her hook. She was very sad and unhappy. She went to the school and had to learn. She wept one whole week because she couldn't go fishing!

Then, after a couple of days, a handsome fisherman, who was very famous in Canada for his big and beautiful fish, came to the school and asked "Who was fishing last week? Please answer!!".

Cinderella whispered, "It was me."

"I want to get married with you", said the famous fisherman.

"Why?"

"Because I want to be with someone who likes fishing." The fisherman answered.

"Ok", answered Cinderella.

They got married after two months...

Happy ending! Cinderella became more rich and they continued to be happy!

The End

-- *Chiho Maemori*

**PERSONAL ESSAY BY AN  
INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE INSTITUTE  
STUDENT, SABINE:**

My name is Sabine. I came from Switzerland to Halifax 6 weeks ago. On the plane, I met such nice people from Canada and made conversations with them! Everyone assured me that Halifax is a very, very nice small city and I was looking forward to arriving there more and more.

Last winter, when I was searching for a place for my language aschool, I used the internet. I checked all countries with the language English. The schools in Canada were always in the same cities: Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary and Montreal. I could imagine how many Swiss people will visit these schools!

Then I found a small and significant the name "Halifax". The only thing I knew about Halifax was the disaster from the Swissair plane in 1998. I knew Halifax is at the east coast from Canada and right away I imagined the stormy sea and the cover with the lighthouses! My heart was already in Halifax!

Well, now I am here and I'm happy that I decided for Halifax! I go to school at ILI ~ A good school with very nice teachers and students from all over the world. I am learning much about other cultures.

In the city, the people are very friendly and open-minded. I can use my English all over. I have also already a few friends from Halifax! I have to speak English all the time because there are no Swiss people.

My English was really bad when I came to Halifax because I didn't learn it at the school in Switzerland. Just one year I went in a n evening school for learning English. Then I came here and thought my English was very good because I understood the people. But now I think I have to learn very, very much. I can hear every word I don't understand and this annoys me!

**DAVID'S WEBSITES:**

For great lesson plans, check out this site:  
<http://www.english-to-go.com/index.cfm?rc=298>

For resources dealing with newcomers to Canada, check out this site:  
<http://www.settlement.org/downloads/linc/LCG1to5/planning.htm>

To find out the origins of words, check out this site: <http://www.wordorigins.org/loanword.htm>

-- *David Juteau*

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**SPRING RENEWAL AND REBIRTH  
by Kevin Laurence Landry**

Have you ever wondered why the New Year starts in the winter but the flowers and blossoms only begin to grow much later? If you consider that months like October and December even start with prefixes that look like numbers, perhaps a connection can be made. "Oct" reoccurs in words like octopus, octagon and pretty much means eight but October is the tenth month. In the same way "Dec" brings up images of the metric system based on ten and decade~ ten years. If we consider March the beginning of the year it all makes more sense.

The spring is a time of rebirth and renewal. Even hiding Easter eggs is reminiscent of birth and finding new rewards (chocolate). Actually the egg has been a symbol for the cycle of life before being associated with the resurrection of Jesus. The rest of this year can be a time for you to rediscover yourself. Actually, I am not planning on my own reincarnation but thinking about reevaluating what you can use your free time for. I have managed to do something constructive with my time besides volunteering for teacher organizations. I'm earning an MA in TESOL (Linguistics) through The University of Surrey.

I was working for an Institute in Seoul and didn't have enough time to turn around but I lucked into a University position. The only problem was that without an MA the job wasn't really secure. I heard a lot of rumors from friends who also got on teaching at Universities in Korea that their contracts wouldn't be renewed unless their credentials improved. I got to talking with Mark Mason, a former co-worker, and he had applied to do a degree through Distance Learning.

At first I looked around on the internet but really had no luck finding anything. I had no idea what exactly to search for and only found out about there being programs like the one I am in from a friend. I decided to apply for the same one and think Surrey has been wonderful. Since that time though, I have become the Facilitator for the KOTESOL Teacher Development and Education Special Interest Group and have discovered lots of other possibilities.

Although, the information was sent to KOESOL, I would like to share it with members of TESL/NS as sites are available online so it is possible to do an MA from Nova Scotia too. Firstly, the University I am doing my degree through has sent KOTESOL a letter explaining their program:

<http://www.kotesol.org/teacherdev/Surrey.html>

A PG Diploma, MA, or even PhD. is possible to attain by distance or in person if you can take the time from work. Next, I'd like to point out a program offered by Birmingham and also available from Korea:  
<http://www.kotesol.org/teacherdev/Birmingham/KOTESOL.htm>

Dennis (Kyung-Sik) Kim is their program administrator in Seoul. Also in Birmingham is the University of Aston which has a great support site: <http://www.philseflsupport.com/>

Moving out of the UK brings us down under to much cheaper degrees. If you are counting your

pennies this may be the way to go. The University of Southern Queensland, Australia has a message for Teachers of English at:

<http://www.usq.edu.au/opacs/cllt/hello.htm>

I worked with a fellow named Rupert Atkinson, who is doing a degree through them. The Modules look pretty classy but he seemed to be doing a lot of little assignments when I was only doing a few big ones. You have to look through their guide books and decide what style is good for you. Another colleague, John Kim, is also doing a degree with them but he has chosen the Masters of Education Program instead. If you are interested in something from somewhere else why not South Africa:

<http://www.unisa.ac.za/dept/lng/mapp.html>

Finally, there are plenty of other options and programs available. My favorite site for information and updates is the listed here:

[http://www.gradschools.com/listings/menus/edu\\_tesol\\_menu.html](http://www.gradschools.com/listings/menus/edu_tesol_menu.html)

Happy Hunting!!!

-- *Kevin Laurence Landry*

Visiting Professor  
Institute of Foreign Language Education  
The Catholic University of Korea  
Song Sim Campus

KOTESOL National Secretary  
Teacher Education Development SIG Facilitator  
<http://www.kotesol.org>

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**MESSAGE FROM UBC:**  
The University of British Columbia -  
English Language Institute Teacher  
Development Program

The English Language Institute at UBC offers a comprehensive teacher development program designed for in-service teachers. The main focus is on practical English language teaching skills within current trends and methods. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss and reflect on their teaching practice with fellow course participants from around the world.

The program has two components:

3 weeks onsite - August 11-29, 2003

24 weeks online - Sept. 29 - March 26, 2004

For more information about the program please go to <http://www.eli.ubc.ca/programs.htm#teach>

