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Contact

Paving the Way to Success

Newsletter of the Association of Teachers of English as a Second Language of Ontario

Standards and Certification Update

In the spring issue of *Contact*, there appeared an outline of the requirements for adult ESL instructor certification, a description of the framework of the Professional Standards Advisory Committee, and what remained to be done in the implementation of the certification project. Since then, the points noted under the latter have been addressed, and at time of writing, the Certification Review Board was considering the applications received up to February 1, 2001, the third deadline date since inception.

The certification application for adult ESL instructors is available from the TESL Ontario office, and the TESL Ontario Web site: www. teslontario.org. The latter has additional information relevant to the certification process including "Frequently Asked Questions" and answers, and a list, to date, of those TESL training programs/institutions that have been recognized as meeting TESL Ontario standards.

Presentations on the certification process have been given at affiliate meetings in London, Wellington-Waterloo, Ottawa, Toronto, Niagara, Peel-Halton, Kingston, as well as at the Bickford Centre, Toronto District Board of Education.

There is now a more sophisticated telephone answering system in the TESL Ontario office, which has the facility to assist those with questions on the certification process.

The **Professional Standards Advisory Committee** was appointed from applications received to March 31, 2000. It is made up of the following:

TESL Training Institution Recognition Advisory Committee:

Chair: Eleanor Rogers, M.A.; Director, Queen's University School of English

David Mendelsohn, Ph.D.; Professor, and Director of the Graduate Program in Linguistics, York University

Elizabeth Taborek, M.Ed.; Consultant, former Administrator, Toronto Board of Education Adult ESL Program

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Editor
Brigid Kelso

Editorial Support Committee
Bob Courchêne
University of Ottawa

Jacqueline Jeffers

Contact, the official newsletter of the Teachers of English as a Second Language of Ontario, is published three times a year. It is available through membership only. To join see the membership form at the back of this issue.

Contact welcomes copy of general interest to association members, including announcements, reports, articles, calls for papers and news items. Contributors should include their full name, title and affiliation. Copy should be preferably e-mailed to the Editor at office@teslontario.org in Windows '97 Rich Text format, or typed double-spaced to the Editor c/o The TESL Association of Ontario, 27 Carlton Street, Ste. 405, Toronto, Ontario, M5B 1L2, (416) 593-4243, Fax (416) 593-0164. Deadlines are January 30, March 30 and June 30.

Inquiries regarding membership or change of address should be addressed to the Membership Secretary c/o the above address.

Inquiries regarding advertising rates and reservation of advertising space should be addressed to the Administrative Director c/o the above address.

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Certification Review Board:

Arnette Gardiner, Honours B.A., ESL Specialist; Guidance Counsellor, G.A. Wheable Centre for Adult Education, London

Barbara Krukowski, LINC/ESL Co-ordinator, Halton District School Board

Chair: Patricia Parnall, M.A.; Adult Education ESL Faculty, Sir Sandford Fleming College, Peterborough

Members-at-Large:

Vera Beletzan, M.A.; TESL Co-ordinator and Instructor trainer, The Canadian Co-operative for Language and Cultural Studies, Inc., and ESL Instructor, Humber College

Jill Cummings, M.Ed.; Adult ESL and LINC Instructor, Conestoga College

Michele Weber, B.A., TESL Certificate, Certificat en francais langue seconde; Co-owner, operator, Jigsaw International Language Academy, Toronto

To date, the Certification Review Board has considered 1039 applications for instructor certification. Because of the volume, the Members-at-Large have been involved in this process. Of the 1039, 945 have been sent certificates, 5 have been denied, and the remainder are pending receipt of additional information. As well, 65 new applications and 22 earlier applications which are now complete are being considered.

The TESL Training Institution Recognition Advisory Committee has recognized ten programs as meeting TESL Ontario standards:

- Algonquin College, Ottawa
- Canadian Co-operative for Language & Cultural Studies, Toronto
- Carleton University, Ottawa
- Conestoga College, Kitchener
- G.A. Wheable Centre, London
- Success Business College, Toronto
- University of Toronto, Woodsworth College, Toronto
- George Brown College
- Humber College
- University of Saskatchewan: CERTESL, distance education delivered by Seneca College, Toronto

Other TESL training may be accepted; other institutions offering such training may not yet have applied for recognition. As institutions apply and are recognized, they will be added to the above list.

It is possible for potential applicants to consult with the respective program directors at most of the above institutions, with a view to augmenting existing training with appropriate modules. This could enable those applying under category A (2) to acquire the necessary components of the 250-hour in-class instruction and/or the 50-hour practicum without taking an entire program. Two exceptions to such provisions are the day program at Humber College, which is a cumulative program, and the G.A. Wheable Centre, which hadn't been heard from at time of writing. The TESL Ontario office staff, PSAC members and Certification Project Co-ordinator will continue to provide information to assist those wishing to acquire the necessary qualifications to successfully apply for TESL Ontario certification.

During the first application period, some applicants had difficulty getting their documents notarized by a notary public. Hence those authorized to sign off on a passport application can authorize applicants' original documents: Chiropractor, Judge, Magistrate, Police Officer, Lawyer, Mayor, Medical Doctor, Dentist, Veterinarian, Minister of Religion authorized under provincial law to perform marriages, Notary Public, Optometrist, Person occupying a senior administrative position in a community college, person occupying a senior university administrative position or teaching appointment in a university, Pharmacist, Postmaster, Principal of an elementary or secondary school, Professional Accountant, Professional Engineer, Signing officer of a bank, trust company or credit union.

The application may also be brought to the TESL Ontario office for copying and authorization. Please do not mail original documents to the office.

The most current application package is available from the TESL Ontario office and Web site. Please do not use old applications.

Leslie Sheffer

The certification application for adult ESL instructors is available from the TESL Ontario office, and the TESL Ontario Web site: www. teslontario.org.

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From the Editor

I hope that you had time over the holidays to read a book for fun. The book I read was Frank McCourt's sequel to *Angela's Ashes* called *'Tis*. In this two-volume memoir, McCourt recounts his life growing up dirt-poor in Limerick, immigrating to America for more opportunities, then working nights and going to school during the day to get an education so that he could become an English teacher in New York City.

Then, in the early 60's, after years of working nights to make enough money to pay tuition, keep himself in an unheated flat and send money to his Ma back home, NYC's "better" schools repeatedly turn him down for jobs because of his Irish brogue.

Today, McCourt would have no trouble getting hired in certain parts of the province, where teachers are being snapped up even without qualifications. What a change from 1993, the year I graduated from the University of Toronto's Bachelor of Education program! I remember only four of the 120 student teachers in my panel having related jobs by graduation day. But the 85 factor has changed all that for unemployed teachers and new B. Ed. grads.

Thank goodness, non-Canadian accents are accepted now. But how do you feel about the Minister of Education's decision to reject the Ontario College of Teachers' request to have mandatory language testing for teachers trained in countries where English is not the language of instruction? We explore the debate in this issue.

I've called this issue Paving the Way to Success because looking at the submissions lined up, I am optimistic that TESL Ontario is helping lay the groundwork (which wouldn't have sounded so good as a theme right?) for success down the road.

Our Standards and Certification are in full swing as you can see in our update. Exemplars for Secondary ESL and TESOL Standards for Pre-K–12 in the U.S. are additional tools teachers can take away from this issue.

You'll be introduced to Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000 and a battle between the Ontario College of Teachers and the Ministry of Education over language proficiency testing for new teachers.

We have two responses to last issue's "A Critical Review of the CLBA." In the classroom, LINC instructor, Linda Schwebke demonstrates how her students created their own Web site and enhanced their writing skills too, while CALL specialist, John Allan explains how we can teach our students to monitor for biased materials when they're surfing the net.

In addition, Cathy Brown has penned a tribute to teacher and social justice advocate, Nancy Pocock, and our regular contributor, Cathy Haghighat, has profiled the Armenian language.

In May, you will receive a bonus issue of *Contact* of the papers and symposia presented at the TESL Ontario 2000 conference. As usual, the conference proceedings issue will be in your mailboxes before the end of the school year.

As always, we welcome your comments on these topics or any of the ESL issues that affect you. Once again, here's our new email address: office@teslontario.org.

Brigid Kelso, Editor

The ESL Standards for Pre-K – 12 Students

Introduction

The numbers of ESL students in K-12 classrooms across the United States has been increasing steadily, especially in large urban areas. If the current trend continues, it is projected "that by the year 2000 the majority of the school age population in 50 or more major U.S. cities will be from minority language backgrounds" (TESOL, 1997). As in Canadian urban settings, students arrive at all grade levels with varying levels of L2 proficiency, content-area knowledge and school-preparatory skills. This situation leaves teachers facing the daunting challenge of trying to provide each student with a learning pathway that will facilitate both integration and academic success. Realizing that this was an almost impossible task without some form of guidance and support (even though classroom teachers have been doing it on a regular basis), TESOL set up a task force to study the growing crisis. As a first step, they developed an *Access Brochure* (See Appendix A of *The ESL Standards for Pre-K – 12 Students*, TESOL, 1997; henceforth *Standards*) which "was instrumental in getting school-based personnel to consider ESOL students and to include them in school reform efforts" (TESOL, 1997). The first task force was succeeded in 1995 by *The Project Committee* whose mandate was to develop a set of standards for the pre-K – 12 school system. After two years of work involving TESOL affiliates, classroom teachers, researchers, several U.S. State Authorities and the National Association for Bilingual Education, they published the *ESL Standards for Pre-K – 12 Students* in 1997.

In the remaining sections of this article, I will briefly outline the Standards' theoretical framework and underlying principles, present their organization with examples and, finally, comment on materials developed using the *Standards*.

Theoretical Framework and Underlying Principles

In the *Introduction: Promising Futures* (TESOL, 1997)[1] section of the document, the authors outline the rationale for the *Standards* along with the theoretical framework which underpins them. This part of the document is divided into the following subsections; for each subsection, I have provided examples:

1) Why ESL standards are needed:

i) ESL students vary greatly in proficiency level and academic needs;

ii) The *ESL Standards* provide the bridge to general education standards expected of all students in the United States.

2) Myths about second language learning:

i) ESOL students learn English quickly and simply by being exposed to and surrounded by native English speakers;

ii) In earlier times immigrant children learned English rapidly and assimilated easily into society.

3) TESOL's vision of effective education for all students:

i) Effective education for ESOL students includes the maintenance and promotion of ESOL students' native languages in school and community contexts;

ii) All educational personnel assume responsibility for the education of ESOL students.

4) General principles of second language acquisition:

i) Language learning is cultural learning;

ii) Language acquisition occurs through meaningful use and interaction.

(TESOL, 1997)

5) Goals for ESL learners (see section on Goals and Standards below).

The authors emphasize that native-like proficiency is essential if ESOL learners are going to succeed in academic and social contexts. The *Standards* are proposed as a blueprint which, if integrated into existing subject-matter standards for native-speaker students, will provide ESOL students with the possibility of achieving their goals. They provide all who work with ESOL students with the means of bridging to the mainstream classroom.

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Organization of ESL Standards[2]

The *Standards* have been organized around three goals and nine standards (three per goal). They have been further subdivided along grade-level clusters normally found in schools:

i) Pre-K – 3
ii) 4-8
iii) 9-12

For each of these grade-level clusters, the *Standards* provide the following information:

i) Goals
ii) Standards
iii) Descriptors
iv) Sample Progress Indicators
v) Vignettes
vi) Discussions

Three types of goals have been established in the *Standards* for ESOL learners in the three grade-level clusters. In addition, for each goal, three standards have been developed.

Goals and Standards

Three types of goals have been established in the *Standards* for ESOL learners in the three grade-level clusters. In addition, for each goal, three standards have been developed. While both the goals and standards are the same for all three levels, what differentiates one level from another are the Progress Indicators and the Vignettes (see below).

Goal 1: To use English to communicate in social settings

Standards for Goal 1:

i) use English to participate in social interaction;

ii) interact in, through, and with spoken and written English for personal expression and enjoyment;

iii) use learning strategies to extend their communicative competence.

Goal 2: To use English to achieve academically in all content areas

Standards for Goal 2:

i) use English to interact in the classroom;

ii) use English to obtain, process, construct and provide subject matter information in spoken and written form;

iii) use appropriate learning strategies to construct and apply academic knowledge.

Goal 3: To use English in socially appropriate ways

Standards for Goal 3:

i) use appropriate language, variety, register, and genre according to audience, purpose, and setting:

ii) use nonverbal communication appropriate for audience, purpose and setting;

iii) use appropriate learning strategies to extend their sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence.

Descriptors

According to the authors, descriptors are "broad categories of discrete, representative behaviours that students exhibit when they meet a standard" (TESOL, 1997). These are very similar to the Global Performance Descriptors found in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000* (CCLB, 2000) that indicate what a student can accomplish in his/her L2. While they are not meant to be prescriptive, they can certainly be used to inform the curriculum. For all three Goals, the descriptors are the same:

i) sharing and requesting information,
ii) expressing needs, feelings, and ideas,
iii) using nonverbal communication in social interactions,
iv) getting personal needs met,
v) engaging in conversations,
vi) conducting transactions.

According to the authors, descriptors are "broad categories of discrete, representative behaviours that students exhibit when they meet a standard" (TESOL, 1997).

Sample Progress Indicators

The Sample Progress Indicators, as with the Progress Indicators in the *CCLB,* are composed of a list of observable activities and/or tasks at the students' disposition indicating how close they have come to meeting a specific standard. Also, similar to the *CCLB,* the indicators become more complex as one moves from Pre-K-12. In the chart below, I have listed the Sample Progress Indicators for Goal 1, Standard 1 across the three grade-level clusters indicating what is common to each cluster.

Goal 1: To use English to communicate in social settings:

Standard 1: Students will use English to participate in social interactions

engage listener's attention verbally or nonverbally * volunteer information and respond to questions about self and family* elicit information and ask clarification questions* clarify and restate information as needed* describe feelings and emotions after watching a movie* indicate interests, opinions, or preferences related to class projects* give and ask for permission* offer and respond to greetings, compliments, invitations, introductions, and farewells* negotiate solutions to problems, interpersonal misunderstandings, and disputes* read and write invitations and thank you letters* use the telephone*	Pre-K – 3 An asterisk (*) indicates that the progress indicator is common to all three level-clusters
ask peers for their opinions, preferences, and desires* correspond with pen pals, English-speaking acquaintances, and friends; write personal essays make plans for social engagements* shop in a supermarket	Grades 4-8 Two asterisks indicate that it is common to 4-8 and 9-12
obtain, complete, and process application forms such as driver's license, social security, college entrance express feelings through drama, poetry, or song; make an appointment defend and argue a position use prepared notes in an interview or meeting	Grades 9-12

The Sample Progress Indicators, as with the Progress Indicators in the *CCLB*, are composed of a list of observable activities and/or tasks at the students' disposition indicating how close they have come to meeting a specific standard.

Vignettes provide "instructional experiences drawn from real-life experiences of teachers" (TESOL, 1997).

It is evident from the *Standards* that what is required as a Sample Progress indicator at the Pre-K – 3 level will be much different from what is required at the 9-12 level. This is demonstrated clearly in both the Vignettes and Discussions that accompany each Standard within each goal.

Vignettes

Vignettes provide "instructional experiences drawn from real-life experiences of teachers" (TESOL, 1997). The vignettes have all been written for a specific group of ESOL learners at a given proficiency level in various types of programs – withdrawal, self-contained ESL, transitional bilingual, mainstream. They provide teachers and learners with practical examples and guidance on how to implement the *Standards* in specific contexts. For the most part, the authors state that the vignettes are presented as examples of TESOL's vision of how ESOL students should be taught.

Discussions

The Discussions are intended "to connect the vignettes to the standards and selected progress indicators" (TESOL, 1997). One might consider them as the teacher's manual that accompanies a

text book. They provide pedagogical justification for what is proposed in the vignettes.

The Discussions are intended "to connect the vignettes to the standards and selected progress indicators" (TESOL, 1997).

Using the ESL Standards

In the section entitled *"Using the ESL Standards",* the authors draw the reader's attention to the fact that there is not a one-to-one correspondence between Pre-K – 3, 4-8 and 9-12 and beginning, intermediate and advanced levels of L2 proficiency (ESL courses in the new Ontario high school curriculum are also based on this realization-the courses are not grade specific). In this section, the authors offer teachers advice on how to deal with beginning, intermediate and advanced students at different grade levels. For each level, they indicate what the teachers can expect in terms of L2 ability (tasks students can accomplish) as well as typical learning curves in terms of L2 development. The authors also provide advice concerning a fourth group of learners-students with limited or interrupted formal schooling- who need special help in integrating into the school system (students who in the Ontario system would be in English for Literacy Development at the high school level). In the *Standards*, teachers are provided with summary charts showing how a specific goal could be met by beginning, intermediate, and advanced students without formal schooling across the three grade-level clusters.

Since the publication of the document, a number of other publications based on the *Standards* have appeared focussing on classroom implementation, assessment, integration of the *Standards* into classroom practice at four different levels (the curriculum design projects based on the document divided the school system into 4 clusters-Pre-K-2, 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12) as well as a series of papers on the Standards (for a list of publications consult www.tesol.org/pubs/catalog/standards.html). These publications along with the standards themselves will certainly provide ESOL teachers with the necessary tools to be able to implement, totally or partially, the *Standards* with their ESOL students.

Integrating the ESL Standards into Classroom Practice

For teachers wishing to implement the *Standards,* TESOL has overseen the publication of four volumes designed to provide teachers with concrete samples of subject-matter units at four different levels: Pre-K-2, 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12. Each document contains six lessons prepared by practitioners in the field. The sample lessons cover all types of ESOL situations and levels of L2 proficiency in a large variety of L2 contexts. In the table below is a sampling of units from the four texts (cf. reference list):

All about Me: Marvellous, Magnificent Me!	Mainstream, self-contained, pre-K class (half day); with a majority of ESOL children, four-week unit
"Eggs"citing Animals	Grades 1 and 2, Pullout, 30 minutes daily
Native Americans, Then and Now	Grades 4 and 5, Literacy/math block, six-week unit
Mastering the Art of Persuasion: Marketing and the Media	Grade 8, ESL Class, one period per day plus one double period per cycle, four-five week unit
Exploring World Religions	Grades 9-12, Sheltered content, single class periods, six-week unit
Autobiographical Writing	Grades 9-12, ESL, double class period, three-week unit

Conclusion

The *ESL Standards* represent a major development in the field of ESL teaching, not only for the United States where they were developed, but for the entire L2 field. They provide practitioners working in L2 contexts in the school system with a guidebook supported by practical examples of how to ensure that ESL students receive the necessary instruction to acquire native-like competence and achieve academic success. It is certainly possible to draw a close parallel between the role these guidelines will play within the school system and the role the Canadian Language Benchmarks have played in adult ESL education. Both act as guideline but both still require competent practitioners to implement them in the classroom.

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Smallwood, B. (Ed.) (2000).*Integrating the ESL Standards into Classroom Practice: Grades Pre-K-2*.Alexandria, VA: TESOL, Inc.

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http://www.tesol.org/pubs/catalog/standards.html

[1] If you haven't done any reading in our field recently, this section (it was originally published as a TESOL paper), could certainly serve as a mini-refresher course.

[2] The remaining sections of the text are taken almost directly from *Standards* (TESOL, 1997).

Robert Courchêne
Second Language Institute
University of Ottawa

Introducing the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000*

The Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks launched the new *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000* on September 28, 2000 at the TESL Canada Conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia. This document is the result of the successful collaboration of the Federal Government through Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Provincial Governments, a language specialist, teachers and learners.

The Canadian Language Benchmarks are standards for the teaching and learning of English and French as a second language by adult newcomers to Canada. This set of 12 language proficiency standards describes the language skills of ESL learners in four areas: speaking, listening, reading and writing. The *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000* are used across the country, providing a clear statement of a person's language ability to administrators, teachers, employers, settlement workers, and others who support newcomers' integration into Canadian Society.

Several accompanying documents are to follow in the coming year:

Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: A Guide to Implementation

This document is intended to provide practising Adult ESL Instructors with a resource to help utilize the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000* in day-to-day teaching. It builds on current directions and practices in ESL instruction and includes numerous classroom examples from across the country. Chapters in the Guide include "Needs Assessment," "Outcomes to Objectives," "Planning a Syllabus or Course," Daily Lesson Planning," "Methodology" and "Classroom-based Assessment."

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Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000 ESL for Literacy Learners

This revision lays out the progression of reading, writing, and numeracy skills for ESL adults who have little or no literacy skills in their first language. These benchmarks are descriptors of what ESL Literacy students are able to do at various phases of their development. The ESL Literacy Benchmarks are divided into a pre-reading and writing phase, called the Foundation Phase, and Phases I-III. Within phases I, II, III are three further divisions: initial, developing and adequate competency.

Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000 Theoretical Framework

The Canadian Language Benchmarks is based on a functional view of language, language use and language proficiency. This support document for the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000* contains the more in-depth study of the Benchmarks. Even so, it only touches on discussing the complex and diverse ways in which adults learn to communicate in a second language. *The CLB 2000: Theoretical Framework* has a complete overview of the Global Descriptors 1-12, theoretical background, an extensive glossary of terms and a bibliography.

Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000 Sample Tasks

Over the development period of the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000* many wonderful additional task examples were developed. This document is a collection of those.

These documents will be available in both hard copy and electronic format. For information on ordering these books, contact the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks. For viewing the electronic copy of these documents, visit the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks' website at www.language.ca.

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For further information on when these documents will be available or further information about the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, please contact:

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College of Teachers and Ministry at odds over teacher language proficiency testing

The Ministry of Education has denied the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) the right to give teachers who have received their teacher training in neither English nor French a language proficiency test as a requirement for registration.

But the OCT and Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) say they have received complaints that this group of teachers does not have the language skills to effectively communicate in the classroom.

The College's recommendation to the Ministry to amend Regulation 184/97 comes as a result of complaints made by both school boards hiring teachers and associate teachers supervising practica in the University of Toronto's Bachelor of Education Program.

"There are indeed complaints from the field about the proficiency of some of our teacher candidates," says Antoinette Gagne, Associate Professor in the Modern Languages Department of Curriculum Teaching and Learning at Ontario Institute of Studies in Education/University of Toronto (OISE/UT).

"Associate teachers, particularly at the secondary school level, have complained about errors in handouts prepared by teacher candidates, errors in writing on the board, a lack of fluency in the spoken language or a heavy (non-Canadian) accent that the children have difficulty understanding."

The OCT's June 2000 issue of "Professionally Speaking," cited the following excerpt from a job application letter written to a school principal by a foreign-trained teacher.

"I harness my aspirations to be an assiduous teacher who will concentrate on preening the career path so as to procure the Ontario Teacher's Certification specifically to my liking…" and continued, "In not circumscribing the interests in my teaching career, I am making credentially advantageous progress as effectual self-improvement schemes."

Gagne favours comprehensive language testing.

"We must play a gate-keeping role. Future teachers must have a good command of the language they will be teaching whether that is English, French or any other international language. We should not be lowering our standards."

Currently, OISE/UT requires that if education diploma candidates do not have English as a first language, that they:

a) have studied full-time for at least four years in an English language school system located in a country where the first language is English, or

b) have achieved the required level of proficiency on one of the forms of the TOEFL test in English language.

The OCT would exempt applicants from taking the proficiency test if they are from the following countries in which English is the language of instruction for high school and post-secondary school: Canada, the U.S., the U.K., Australia, the Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, the Cayman Islands, Guyana, the Rep. of Ireland, Jamaica, Montserrat, New Zealand, St. Kitts-Nevis, South Africa, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Candidates who completed their secondary and post-secondary studies in Canada, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Monaco and Switzerland are exempt from taking the test as well. The test also can be waived if the applicant provides a letter from his or her institution indicating that English was the language of instruction.

If candidates have not completed their studies in English, they would be required by the OCT to meet required scores not unlike what OISE/UT demands. For example, OCT requires that applicants score an overall minimum 250 on the computer-based TOEFL with a minimum of 5.5 on the written component. OISE/UT, on the other hand, requires a minimum of 6.0 on the written component.

Anne Marie Muir, a grade 5 teacher who has also taught ESL for foreign-trained teachers for the Toronto District Catholic School Board for the past

"There are indeed complaints from the field about the proficiency of some of our teacher candidates."

"Associate teachers, particularly at the secondary school level, have complained about errors in handouts prepared by teacher candidates, errors in writing on the board, a lack of fluency in the spoken language or a heavy (non-Canadian) accent that the children have difficulty understanding."

three years, says that several of her teacher-learners have been getting work "instantly – as soon as they get their interim certificates of qualification."

But Muir discourages her learners from working immediately because she feels many of them just are not ready. That's why she advises them, particularly those who have been here only a few months, to get volunteer experience before they start applying for jobs.

"It's not just the language, it's the different culture," Muir says, "Many of them are in shock especially when it comes to classroom management. (In terms of acceptable student behaviour) Western Europe is closer to here, but it's different for people coming from Asia, Eastern Europe and Africa. They're not used to the way the kids act and how parents question them either. In many of their countries, the teacher was a person who commanded a lot of respect and authority."

It's not just the language, it's the different culture," Muir says, "Many of them are in shock especially when it comes to classroom management.

Muir doesn't feel that the teacher language testing or other testing is the solution.

"You might have an amazing teacher who has an accent or has some problems with the language but it's not really an issue."

On the other hand, Muir feels that the quality of teaching will be compromised unless something is done soon. Because the 85 factor was implemented a few years ago, "teachers have been leaving in droves." To make up for the teacher shortage in the Toronto District Catholic Board, she says, people without qualifications are being hired.

"Fifty positions are being filled by educational assistants and youth workers, and in terms of supply teaching, we often have parents who not only don't have teaching qualifications, but sometimes don't even have university."

"Fifty positions are being filled by educational assistants and youth workers, and in terms of supply teaching, we often have parents who not only don't have teaching qualifications, but sometimes don't even have university."

However, Muir offers her own solution. "Perhaps we could accept a lower score and then test (the teachers) again in two years after they've been working in the language, and they've become more comfortable with the jargon and terms."

She notes that by rejecting the OCT's request for mandatory language testing, the Education Minister is making it easier for people to fill the jobs created by the mass exodus of retiring teachers over the past couple of years.

The foreign-trained teachers who are Muir's students also have an opinion on the subject. They agree that there should be standards for language proficiency, but they do not think that the TOEFL test is a good indicator because "it's easy to master the tips without mastering the language."

Some complain that the TOEFL reading texts tend to be scientific and technical or medical, but never related to education. The class feels that the only reason these language tests are used at all is because they are internationally accepted.

Many of the newcomers feel that the OCT should develop its own language assessment tool based on the education-related terminology. They also feel that the non-relevant test is another barrier for foreign-trained professionals and that they are penalized financially enough as it is – having to pay the $340 fee to apply to the OCT, without the additional cost of taking the TOEFL (or similar).

One member of the class pointed out the standardized tests are so difficult that she believes teachers educated here would be unable to pass them. "It's just another hoop to jump through," she says. "Why should we have to prove ourselves to be more proficient in language than most Canadians?"

Ministry of Education spokesperson Rob Savage responded in a December telephone interview that Minister Ecker is "reviewing the College's request."

Brigid Kelso is editor of *Contact*

www.come.to/eslclub: Building a Web site to Enhance Writing Skills of LINC 4/5 Learners

Genesis of the Project

While I was introducing my LINC 4/5 class to the immensely popular Internet site *Dave's ESL Café* one day, I casually remarked to my students that *I* needed a Web site for *my* students. After months of surfing the net in search of useful material that I could incorporate into my lessons, I reluctantly concluded that many of the Web sites designed for ESL learners have become fairly predictable knock-offs of Dave's site – digitized clones of each other, overstuffed with grammar, reading and writing activities, jokes, idioms and links to everything under the sun. While undertaking my survey of ESL Web sites for learners, I observed that most sites are structured in much the same way as a textbook and characterized by two commonalities – they are irrelevant in content and pedagogic in intent. More specifically, the content of many ESL Web sites is largely global, impersonal and academic. Also, most sites targeted *at* ESL students are built, written, and maintained *by* language teaching professionals.

Although teaching my students to access material through the Internet seemed hip and leading-edge at that time, it occurred to me that what I was essentially doing was using the same kind of material already available in existing print, audio, and visual media – material published by ESL practitioners to be consumed by ESL learners. While there is nothing inherently wrong with using Internet material that conforms to using such material, it became obvious to me that, when using ESL Web sites like *Dave's ESL Cafe*, I was only providing ESL learners with *more* of the *same* conventional learning experiences they had previously encountered – the only difference being, we were getting at them through the Internet instead of through books. Considering the sophisticated technical level of many of our recent immigrants at the LINC 4/5 level (which in more cases than not exceeds that of most ESL instructors), learning how to use the computer and navigating the Internet have long since ceased to be new technologies that we are obliged to teach.

Rationale

The challenge to me as a teacher then became how I could utilize the Internet, take advantage of its allure, and harness its potential as a tool to promote acquisition of the language skills that the learners were lacking, rather than use it as an end in itself. I theorized that if the students were to set up a Web site of their own, one which was fully interactive with e-mail capabilities, they could use it as a venue for reporting on their class activities, showcasing their writing, and communicating with classmates, friends and families around the world.

I reasoned that a student built, written and maintained Web site would allow both my students and me to achieve converging and diverging teaching and learning objectives. Furthermore, since we had yet not encountered an all-ESL student-generated, designed, written and maintained Web site by February 2000, the novelty of our project made working on the site all the more exciting. What's more, I had in my class the primary resource required to build our site – a fledgling self-styled Web developer named Ann who was eager to try out her wings in order to gain some relevant experience to put on her resume. What better way could I support her than by providing her with the opportunity to take control of the technical end of an authentic work assignment?

The learners had all of the basic ingredients they needed to succeed in their journey into cyberspace: the motivation to improve writing skills, the opportunity to work in a LINC laboratory with fully loaded computers, and the desire to do something fresh and original. After much lively discussion, the students settled on *Ottawa ESL Club* as the name of their site. Admittedly, the name they chose does resonate *Dave's ESL Café,* but that is where the similarity ends; indeed, the name testifies more to the intertextuality of our utterances and the underlying social processes mediated by our writing activities than to any conscious or unconscious will to imitate.

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What finally took shape, however, was a truly inventive web site – a continual work in progress – where *ESL learners* in the Ottawa Carleton District School Board LINC program write *for* and *to* other ESL learners and the teachers that populate *their* world. It is a Web site that is deliberately, consciously and distinctly local, personal and expressive. The writing produced for the Web site – and all the of the pre- and post-writing activities which the process entails – has enabled the students to do much more than achieve measurable and observable objectives as defined by the Canadian Language Benchmarks. The writing has created and sustained a complicated web of social interactions between friends, family and groups which otherwise would not have taken place.

The home of the *Ottawa ESL Club*, www.come.to/eslclub, has become a site whose ownership resides exclusively with the learners and the interested members of their varied communities.

The home of the *Ottawa ESL Club*, www.come.to/eslclub, has become a site whose ownership resides exclusively with the learners and the interested members of their varied communities. It is neither a conventional top-down site (service providers writing for students) nor a bottom-up (students writing for service providers) site. Rather, it is a hybrid (students writing for, and to, students, family, friends and service providers and vice-versa) and represents the best methodology, ideology and technology from every educational perspective. Used as a learning tool in this way, the Internet not only directly facilitates social and personal communications, but it also indirectly results in the acquisition of a myriad of academic writing and computer competencies.

Objectives

While working within the guidelines of the CLB, I had hoped our writing activities would give the learners better control over the structure, vocabulary and mechanics of writing within the parameters of the required text.

At the outset, my teaching and learning objectives for the Web site could best be described as conventional, modest and limited. While working within the guidelines of the CLB, I had hoped our writing activities would give the learners better control over the structure, vocabulary and mechanics of writing within the parameters of the required text. Drawing upon a range of in-class activities and out-of-class exigencies, I provided the students with the opportunity to experiment with narrative, expository, descriptive and argumentative rhetorical genres. Students told the stories of their lives in the section. They showed readers what they could do by scripting one-minute resumes of their professional and educational experience in the section. They described their jobs in the section. They argued against proposed cutbacks to ESL funding in the section.

Since most LINC 4/5 students came to our program with highly-developed computer skills, my technical objectives focused mainly on using the computer and Internet to improve the editing, formatting and research skills needed for their personal, academic and job search activities.

The reality is that learners accomplished many more writing and computer objectives than I ever could have anticipated or planned for. As an outgrowth of prewriting, writing, editing and presenting activities which were accomplished by working in pairs, small groups and whole-class configurations, students improved not only their writing but also their reading, listening and speaking skills. By using the interactive e-mail feature that Ann built into the site, in addition to learning how to send and receive e-mail with attachments, students became expert at finding and downloading graphics and information from other Web sites.

It would be next to impossible for me to map what Devon Woods describes as the "heterarchical structure" of events and objectives in the evolution of our Web site. Suffice it to say, there was a constant shifting of direction and emphasis to meet the students' needs, desires and goals. The Web site, as it emerged, supported individualized and personalized learning and teaching. The structure of my teaching was appropriately fluid, and I was always ready to reformulate plans to conform with the ever-changing goals and objectives of the students. Indeed, given the democratic, decentralized, chaotic nature of the medium itself, any other approach would have been futile.

Methodology

The Internet, with all of its tantalizing buttons, lights and graphics, seems to be equipped with an internal "motivator" which automatically activates students. Little effort and few suasions on the part of the teacher are required to get the students started. However, sustaining the students through the often painful and tedious process of composing, editing and revising remains an ongoing challenge to the instructor. To that end, I drew heavily upon standard instructional methods of teaching writing, some of which included modelling, brainstorming, mapping, and organizing shared experiences. I found that the students enjoyed

and profited greatly from a seminar approach to writing similar to that which is employed at the graduate level in rhetoric courses. Students gained a great deal of encouragement from the prewriting reading and group discussions. Sharing of drafts at various stages of the writing process stimulated those for whom writing well seemed to be an insurmountable challenge. Towards the end of the term, I realized that everything the students did and wanted to do in class was for the purpose of writing about it for the Web site. Indeed, my students lived to write.

Software, Hardware, Peripherals

The actual writing for our site took place during class hours in a LINC computer laboratory equipped with fully-loaded PC's, Microsoft Word, and an Internet connection. The following peripherals were provided by and used exclusively by Ann from her home:

- Celeron 400 clone
- UMAX Astra 1220P scanner
- Canon Power Shot Pro 70 digital camera
- Macromedia Dreamweaver
- Macromedia Fireworks
- Rogers Cable ISP

Although Ann was relatively new to web design, development and maintenance, she estimates that it took her approximately one hour each day to scan, transfer, size and format photos and compositions.

Description of the Site

The structure and format of www.come.to/eslclub could best be described as an animated e-zine in that it bears a striking resemblance to a high-gloss hard-copy magazine, but with the added feature of moving graphics. The overlap inherent to rhetorical genres made defining the various sections in which to place student writing the most difficult part of the set-up of the homepage. I finally resolved this problem by resorting to the somewhat arbitrary yet familiar journalistic categories such as People, Places, Work, News, Writing, and Advice. As our News section grew, it was further divided into months. The writing section was organized by topic. Two months into the project, Ann linked our site to our own e-mail address through which readers and writers could correspond directly without having to access their own personal e-mail accounts.

Student Evaluation

Who can better evaluate the success of a project than the participants themselves? Below are excerpts of essays written by students who were asked to assess their learning experience. Learners responded to the following questions:

1. Has your writing improved this term? Why or why not?
2. Why did we build a Web site?
3. Was writing more enjoyable when you wrote for our Web site? Why or why not?
4. How was the classroom writing different this term from the writing you have done in previous classes?
5. What did you learn in the computer room this term?
6. Besides writing, what other skills did you use?
7. Overall, describe your personal experience writing for the Web site.

Working on the Web Site

Ann

I think my English improved. But I have never written in English before, so I have nothing to compare it with. And, of course, with every repetition it gets better and better.

We built our Web site, because it's interesting and new for all of us. It is on the Internet and everybody, our friends and families, can see it, read our stories and even look at our pictures. They are more aware about our lives in Canada.

Of course, the writing was more enjoyable when we wrote for the Web site. You know before you write, that your story is going to the Internet, so you work hard and you take your assignment seriously. And after everything's done you enjoy it very much.

It was my first class with a lot of writing. We had a lot of different writing. Some of the assignments were really hard. Day by day, we have learned more and improved our English skills.

In the computer room, I learned to type fast. My typing in English got much better. Most of the

I found that the students enjoyed and profited greatly from a seminar approach to writing similar to that which is employed at the graduate level in rhetoric courses.

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things about computer and developing a Web site I learned at home.

Our English classes were very useful for me. I think my English got better. I speak more easily now, but I still have to work more and more.

My personal experience, while I was working on the Web site is huge. Besides writing and improving English, I have learned how to develop and design a web page. Now I know, that I can do it, and I feel so good and proud of myself.

Besides writing and improving English, I have learned how to develop and design a web page. Now I know, that I can do it, and I feel so good and proud of myself.

Jing

My writing has improved this term. I use more vocabulary in my papers. Before I always used little simple words again and again. I've learned how to organize the structure of an essay, and change it a lot from one essay to another. I find it's easier to express myself now.

When I wrote for our Web site, writing was more enjoyable. I wanted to do my best because my classmates, friends and family might see my work in any corner of the world. I wrote a lot of funny stories and opinions to share with them. When I had a good paper, I was proud of my improvement.

In previous class, I just sat down and wrote independently using my pen. It was boring and sometimes I didn't know what I could write. Linda's class is different. She wrote every paper first to show us her ideas, and then we discussed around topic. When I began to write, there was already a lot of stuff in my mind. I could choose the best idea and add more interesting things to make my paper better. After writing, we shared our papers. We learn from each other. This is the best way to improve my writing. It has opened my mind.

I learned how to write on the computer. It was easy to edit. I learned how to get a picture from Internet and insert it in my paper. And how to search for information I needed on the Internet.

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I learned to work on a team. I learned how to edit. I improved my listening and speaking also.

Sibel

Unfortunately, I started this class in the middle of the term, so I missed many things. We wanted to show everyone what we were studying. We wanted everyone to know us. Today, the Internet is the most widely used communication tool, so all around the world many people look at our Web site. For example, the other day I sent our Web site address to my cousin, and then she showed it to her friends. They can learn about our daily life.

I learned how to use a disk. I copied many documents. I learned how to find pictures. I saved my daughter's pictures and then I sent by e-mail to my family. I developed my typing ability. When I wrote many stories on the computer, first, I read them, second I spoke about them. Third, I listened to my classmate's stories. Finally, speaking and reading and listening developed. I feel good. When I saw my stories on the Web site. I was proud. I said to myself, I can improve my English.

Hortensia

Yes, certainly I feel my writing is improving a lot. This term we were writing frequently, so I really improved my writing and spelling skills too. Also I think when I need to write, the ideas came more naturally.

We're very pleased with the work Ann has done – taking pictures, copying and pasting our stories and also for the valuable help with technical problems in our computers.

I think I really enjoyed writing for the web site because everybody can read it and know about my family and me. Also it is more exciting to write for the Web site because the whole world can see it and enjoy it too.

The difference between this term and the previous one was only a little, but also I enjoyed it very much because we wrote and read to our class and we enjoyed our stories very much and we were able to learn about different cultures in the world. And, this term we wrote and also we shared with our classmates. We shared our stories with the world.

I think I have learned a lot about the computer. My typing skills are much better. I am used to using the Internet. I have learned how to copy and paste. And the most important thing I have an e-mail address and I am able to send e-mails to my friends and family too.

In general, I am very happy with our Web site. It is very exciting to write for it and to put pictures on it. And I feel very proud to give our address to

my friends so they can see our Web site. One thing I really enjoyed so much was sharing our stories with our classmates and teacher. I have learned a lot about cultures, beliefs and customs

Yuko

I think I improved my writing. We had writing time in class almost every day. It made me push myself. Before I didn't like to write in English, because it is very difficult to express what I wanted to say.

I enjoyed writing for our Web site, because everybody can see our work. Also we can get here other people's opinion from anywhere in the world. I especially wrote about my mother on a web site. I am very proud of it. My writing made my family happy and they could see what I was doing at school. After I got a message from my mother, I wanted to make nicer writing. A Web site makes everybody work hard.

I learned about many things in the computer room. My typing is getting faster. I learned how to get pictures for my writing. I can find information from the Internet. Now I can work with the computer faster.

Also I learned many things besides writing, like speaking and listening. We sometimes discuss a topic before we start to write. And I learned by working in a group. I learned about many different cultures from classmates.

This is my first experience building a Web site. At first I thought I didn't want to write for it, because I am shy to say anything in public. But now I am very happy to have this. My family and friends are very happy to see what I am doing in Canada. Now I am interested in building a Web site, so I will study it in the future.

Recommendations

To ensure that students are writing and that teachers are teaching writing, a minimal investment in support staff and equipment is required when embarking on such a project. It is important to reiterate that this Web site never would have taken shape without the generosity and boundless energy of our student Web developer. Not only did Ann spend countless hours designing and maintaining the site, she also made her personal equipment and Web space available to the class.

It is unrealistic and impractical to expect that students or teachers could or would contribute the long hours and expensive hardware required to nurture and sustain similar projects of this scope. Given the tremendous amount of technical support required to develop a Web site, I would suggest that funding be allocated to future ESL programs for the purchase of necessary peripherals such as scanners and digital cameras, the contracting of ISP's and the staffing of a student Web developer. If such supports were put in place, not only could writing programs and curricula develop within and around one of the most exciting technologies of our age, but also student Web developers could gain valuable experience while earning a small salary testifying to the value of their work.

For a start, the LINC program might develop either one large communal Web site, allocating sections to the various service providers, or individual service providers could develop their own site, allocating sections to the various levels or classes. The classes or levels, in turn, could set up their own pages either topically, temporally, biographically or functionally. The possible configurations are infinite, as are the possibilities for creativity, growth and expression. Virtually speaking, only the cyber sky is the limit!

Linda Schwebke
Ottawa Carlton Separate School Board

Given the tremendous amount of technical support required to develop a Web site, I would suggest that funding be allocated to future ESL programs for the purchase of necessary peripherals such as scanners and digital cameras, the contracting of ISP's and the staffing of a student Web developer.

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This bibliography was omitted in Hyland and Lee's piece in the last issue.

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Comments on Hyland and Lee's "A Critical Review of the Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessment"

I appreciate Hyland and Lee's critical review of the CLBA (*Contact*, 26:3). Discourse of this kind challenges us to think of the implications of the Canadian Language Benchmarks, thereby providing greater clarity and fresh insights. It is in this light that I would like to comment on their review, from my perspective as both an accredited CLBA assessor and ESL practitioner.

"Language acquisition is defined as training" (p.14): I could find no reference to this definition in the Canadian Language Benchmarks, Working Document (Citizenship and Immigration, 1996). I suspect, though, that the authors' view is in keeping with North's (2000) comments that language proficiency scales (such as those used in the CLB) have been misinterpreted as "representing a utilitarian, behavioural, or even behaviourist perspective" (p. 25), and that they have been identified with "professional training and social engineering undertaken at the expense of personal development" (p.27) . He argues that a functional view of proficiency, must, by definition, focus on describing what people do (performance), not simply what they know (competence), and that assessment based on descriptions of behaviour does not necessarily imply narrow behavioural objectives. Citing Romiszowski (1981:3), North further suggests that language proficiency scales are essential maps which guide the learner and promote learner autonomy:

> "Training is akin to following a tightly fenced path, in order to reach a predestined goal at the end of it. Education is to wander freely in the fields to left and right of this path - preferably with a map.....As most training involves some unplanned learning (educational effects) and most education involves some planned goal-orientated teaching, the value of these two terms as discriminators is somewhat dubious" (North, 2000, p.27).

"[Writing] tasks A and B measure skills suitable for a placement test, but C and D are more proficiency-oriented" (p.14): This statement is perplexing. What distinction do Hyland and Lee draw between placement and proficiency assessment? Proficiency is what is being measured, and placement is one of several decisions that might result from the measurement of proficiency. Hyland and Lee referred to Rossiter and Pawlikowska-Smith's (1999) study which raised a similar question as to whether the CLBA was intended for placement or proficiency measurement. My reading of Rossiter and Pawlikowska-Smith's article indicates that their problem was related to the limited reporting of proficiency. The CLBA Client Profile simply reports the benchmark level of each skill area. They found that assessors varied in the amount of additional information provided. This lack resulted in their instructors having to reassess students. They urged more discrete information, which would render the CLBA scores more useful for placement in classes with several proficiency levels, e.g. 3.1, 3.2, 3.3., as well provision of learners' background information collected by the assessors. This would minimize the need for further interviews and on-site assessment. I fully agree with this recommendation, but I make the point that the question here is not whether the CLBA is a placement or a proficiency test, but whether the CLBA, which is a proficiency test, is as useful as it could be, in its present format, for adequate placement decisions.

What distinction do Hyland and Lee draw between placement and proficiency assessment?

Referring to the CLBA test battery, Hyland and Lee compared writing tasks A and B with tasks C and D. There are four parallel writing tasks for Stage I and Stage II. All tasks in the CLBA battery are proficiency-oriented, i.e. what the student can do with language. Each task reflects a different genre, and tasks become increasingly more complex, requiring more language. They range from tasks requiring minimal writing skills, e.g. copying information, to those requiring more extensive skills, e.g. express complex ideas. One of the goals of the CLBA is to assess proficiency in order to place students in programs where their language needs might be met.

> "The need to separate skills may have compromised the measurement of communicative language proficiency" (p.14): I do not believe this to be the case. Bachman and Palmer's rejection of the separation of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) is a rejection of a model of testing that characterizes these skills as "abstract modalities...into channel (audio, visual) and

I make the point that the question here is not whether the CLBA is a placement or a proficiency test, but whether the CLBA, which is a proficiency test, is as useful as it could be, in its present format, for adequate placement decisions.

mode (receptive, productive)....ignoring the fact that language use is realized in specific situated language tasks. Thus, rather than attempting to distinguish among four abstract skills, we find it more useful to identify specific language use tasks and to describe these in terms of their task characteristics and the areas of language ability they engage" (Bachman and Palmer, 1996, p.79). In this regard, the CLB, in its task-based focus, is consistent with the Bachman/Palmer model of language proficiency which integrates language ability with task characteristics in specific communicative, purposeful contexts.

Contrary to Hyland and Lee's statement, the prompts and instructions do contain information to provide sufficient context for writing.

Emphasizing the integration of skills in actual task performance, despite the overt separation for assessment purposes, the Working Document 1996 states, "There is no consensus in the field about task-based language instruction; however, in proficiency descriptions, using communicative competence to accomplish tasks provides the learner and the teacher with demonstrable and measurable outcomes of performance. Each task usually integrates a number of skills and competencies in it" (p.10). On the same page, this point is supported by the following footnote:

> "This feature [integration of the four skills] can be easily construed as criticism but it describes what happens in reality. The neat division of skills and related tasks into mostly oral, mostly reading or mostly writing is a helpful construct, but only a construct, for describing, teaching and testing aspects of language competence; a matter of emphasis and convenience". Certificate in Spoken and Written English, 1993. Australia, p.7, Davies (1977), p.65-67.

> "Students are not required to ask questions to clarify how to fill in the Task B Writing form, nor are instructions attached to the form" (p.14): All writing tasks are accompanied by writing prompts and clear, simple instructions. Contrary to Hyland and Lee's statement, the prompts and instructions do contain information to provide sufficient context for writing. Access by the learner to the instructional language and prompts is, by itself, an indicator of competence (what the student knows). Norton and Stewart (1999) remind us that the CLBA is a low-stakes placement assessment in which clients are not penalized for their lack of language, as for example in TOEFL tests. Rather, the test instruments "are used to determine the amount of access achieved, so that learners can be placed in programs where gaps in access can be appropriately addressed" (Norton and Stewart, 1999, p.240).

"One writing task asks students to describe a picture by writing text underneath it" (p.14): There is no such task in the battery.

> "Multiple-choice questions for reading.... Such questions do not measure the ability to reconstruct the argument of the text but merely the ability to extract information" (p.14): I agree with Hyland and Lee that a multiple-choice format renders the reading tasks low in interactional nature. The integration of, for example, reading and speaking, would have lent greater authenticity to reading tasks. However, the mandate of the test developers was to develop instruments that would be used in separate-skills assessment, to increase ease of administration (Norton and Stewart, 1999). Integrated-skill tasks, while highly desirable and more authentic, present problematic questions for assessors – which skill(s) are being measured, and how do they interact to influence performance? As an example, Norton and Stewart identified taking a telephone message as an authentic task which appears to be a good choice for a writing task, but which requires perhaps as much proficiency in listening skills as in writing.

Hyland and Lee state that in real life much of the information we read is passed on to others in the form of a critique or summary, requiring the ability to reconstruct an argument of the text, not merely to extract information. I suggest that many reading tasks associated with daily living are related to purely informational texts, containing few or no arguments and requiring ability to simply extract information.

Hyland and Lee state that in real life much of the information we read is passed on to others in the form of a critique or summary, requiring the ability to reconstruct an argument of the text, not merely to extract information. I suggest that many reading tasks associated with daily living are related to purely informational texts, e.g., bills, notices, flyers, or forms containing few or no arguments and requiring ability to simply extract information. Furthermore, for those tasks that do require reconstruction of the argument and further action, surely the ability to extract information, accurately decode the message, and know the facts is fundamental to success.

> "If skills are separated in the CLBA, the student's ability to make his/her needs clear....use coping mechanisms...Can we assume that they will be taught?" (p.15):. The CLB documents state clearly that the benchmarks do not represent a syllabus. They are

descriptive, not prescriptive. However, I agree with Hyland and Lee that there is great danger in teaching to the test. James (2000) cites lack of synchronization between the LINC Curriculum Guidelines and the CLB/LINC Proficiency checklists, and cautions against viewing the performance indicators/outcomes as the target objectives of instruction. Instead, he urges the focus be on helping learners achieve the global performance descriptors. I believe that the success of the CLB depends on consistency of interpretation and use by teachers, and much remains to be done in teacher education related to the CLB. I will expand on this point later.

Hyland and Lee also state that formal and informal writing are conflated in the CLBA and ask whether this means that teachers will ignore their differences in teaching. First, there is clear emphasis in the training of assessors and the assessment manual on appropriacy of writing, which includes style, register, vocabulary, etc. Second, I believe that again, Hyland and Lee are referring to the reporting format of the CLBA, which has been discussed earlier, and that this is another example of how the CLBA Client Profile might be improved. Third, the writing tasks in the benchmarks documents (1996 and 2000) indicate three categories – Community, Study, and Work. Teachers are expected to know the differences in these genres. If they do not, the problem lies in teacher selection or training, not in the CLB or the CLBA.

"The CLB contributes to isolation of ESL learners from the broader educational community (p.15)": Hyland and Lee cite Anderson Ho's comments (1998) about "intercultural adaptation, developing a sense of belonging in Canada, [and] increasing personal expression and social participation" and her suggestion that the CLB inhibits the development of such characteristics. My own experience in a school board program does not support this claim.

Prior to the benchmarks and through our current efforts to implement benchmarks in the adult centre where I work, a prime focus of our classes has always been knowledge about Canadian systems in order to empower our learners. Within the LINC Curriculum, students learn about their rights and responsibilities as tenants, home owners, employees. Last year, my own higher level students got involved in the Oak Ridges Moraine Development debate, which is now before the Ontario Municipal Board. Some attended the town hall meetings, and some wrote letters to their local councillors and the media. Our students discuss gay rights, student rights, children's rights, consumer rights. The newspaper is an important classroom tool through which students become familiar with and discuss issues that touch their lives here in Canada and in Toronto. I do not believe that our centre is unique. If this kind of content existed in syllabi prior to benchmarks, it will continue to exist with a benchmark system. From personal experience, I have not found the benchmarks to be a constraining factor in syllabus development.

Discussion

I believe that the CLB and the CLBA, represent significant steps forward in the search for a common language in Canada to describe learner proficiency, increase accountability to learners, and improve teaching, away from "teachers' 'fuzzy' internalized norms and standards" (Murphy and Cleveland, 1991). Our efforts are consistent with those of other nations faced with the challenge of making language learning programs transparent to the various stakeholders. However, I feel the full effectiveness of the system will depend on one critical factor – priority placed on professional development for teachers, which was mentioned earlier. I will place this need in the context of the view from the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks versus the view from the field.

The preface of the Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000 (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks) states, "In small, but increasing numbers, immigrants are able to demonstrate to employers, using the Canadian Language Benchmarks, that they have the language skills needed for available jobs and to demonstrate to registrars that they have the language skills needed to succeed in non-ESL/EFL courses" (p.v.) This is a strong claim to make for an assessment system that is just four years old, for which an implementation guide to assist administrators, teachers, and curriculum writers is still being developed, and for which comparability studies with other accepted norm-referenced tests are far from conclusive (Watt and Lake, 2000; Jones, 1998; Centre for Language Training and Assessment, 1998). This in no way detracts from the work done and currently being

Hyland and Lee also state that formal and informal writing are conflated in the CLBA and ask whether this means that teachers will ignore their differences in teaching. First, there is clear emphasis in the training of assessors and the assessment manual on appropriacy of writing, which includes style, register, vocabulary, etc.

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undertaken in various parts of the country, but it has been done in the absence of a national or provincial implementation plans, and is perhaps indicative of the void that existed prior to the benchmarks. An overview of the ESL scene in Ontario is some indication of the work that might need to be done at the classroom level.

A 1998 study revealed that in Ontario, the use of the CLB for purposes of initial, ongoing, and exit assessment, as well as for developing curricula and learning materials was inconsistent among LINC, ESL-only (non-credit), and LINC/ESL organizations (non-credit), with between 30% and just over 50% of the two latter groups reporting usage.

A 1998 study sponsored by the Ontario Region of Citizenship and Immigration Canada in cooperation with the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training revealed that in Ontario, while the CLB was described by respondents as having "the potential to usher in major improvements in the quality of ESL" (Power Analysis Inc., 1998, p.16), the use of the CLB for purposes of initial, ongoing, and exit assessment, as well as for developing curricula and learning materials was inconsistent among LINC, ESL-only (non-credit), and LINC/ESL organizations (non-credit), with between 30% and just over 50% of the two latter groups reporting usage. LINC-only organizations, which, theoretically, should have reported 100% use of the CLB, reported only between just over 70% and about 90% (pp. 16-17). The use by organizations offering credit programs is very low. This same study found funding to be a high priority for both teachers and administrators, and professional development a stated need for 94% of teachers (p. 104). If these findings are correct, the claim about the achievements of the CLB system with reference to some Ontario classrooms might be premature.

James identified the importance of teachers' interpretation of the CLB with the following comments: "If the primary target for a LINC [by extension, any ESL program implementing the CLB] provider or instructor is helping learners to achieve the Global Outcomes, and instruction and planning are consistently done with a focus on these Global Outcomes, there is little to worry about" (James, 2000, p.24). This is what effective implementation of the CLB comes down to – consistent understanding, interpretation, and use by teachers – and this is what, I believe, is partly at the heart of the Hyland and Lee article.

If these findings are correct, the claim about the achievements of the CLB system with reference to some Ontario classrooms might be premature.

In Western Canada, among LINC providers, a good understanding of and familiarity with the CLBA scores and their implications for placement purposes was found to be lacking. Respondents reported that orientation sessions were "too general, too brief, and/or too infrequent to facilitate continuing familiarity" (Rossiter and Pawlikowska-Smith, 1999, p.42). This suggests that the degree of teacher training and support related to the CLB and the CLBA might be deficient in other parts of the country, too.

Brindley (2000) argues strongly for commitment by educational authorities to professional development and training for teachers within an assessment system, like the CLB, that leaves development of curricula to individual providers and development of syllabi and assessment materials to individual teachers. In Ontario, 74% of providers require their instructors to develop curricula based on the needs of their learners (Power Analysis Inc. 1998, p.16). Implementation of the CLB is an onerous task to place on administrators and teachers without a coordinated implementation plan and special funding.

Brindley cited Fullan's (1982) summing up of the critical role played by the classroom teacher in educational change: "Education change depends on what teachers do and think – it's as simple as that" (Brindley, 1998, p.74). It is my hope that the experiences of other countries involved in large scale assessment programs will inform implementation plans which ultimately affect the classroom teacher in whom the effectiveness of the entire system resides.

Marg Fortin is an M.Ed. student at OISE and an experienced ESL and Literacy instructor. She currently works with the York Region District School Board where she teaches in the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Program and is the ESL/LBS Assessor.

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A Response to "A Critical Review of the CLBA"

This letter is in response to the recent article by Hyland and Lee, titled "A Critical Review of the Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessment" (26, 3, 13-17).

While the authors have obviously studied the CLBA in some depth, and provide a number of useful insights for consideration in future CLBA development, their article contains some factual inaccuracies and unfounded assumptions.

A brief background to the development of the CLBA may prove useful. Development of the CLBA occurred in tandem with revisions to the draft version of "Language Benchmarks: English as a Second Language for Adults", in preparation for release of the 1996 CLB Working Document. The assessment was therefore designed to address the four competency types identified in the CLB for each of Listening/ Speaking, Reading and Writing. For each skill, the CLBA consists of a two-stage assessment, each stage comprising 4 tasks reflecting the specifications of these competency types. In the writing component, for example, the task types include Reproducing Information, Filling Out Forms, Conveying Messages / Describing Personal Information and Expressing Ideas. Each of these competency types is represented by a specific task of the CLBA.

It is important to note that high-stakes applications such as academic admissions have never been suggested by the test developers. Thus, the comment by Hyland and Lee that many of the tasks in the CLBA "may be suitable only for placement into classes" is not a defensible criticism of the assessment, but rather an observation that the CLBA fulfils the application for which it was designed.

In their introduction, Hyland and Lee state that they intend to argue that, "while the CLB may be a good indicator of the kinds of practical tasks that students should be able to perform at certain levels of proficiency, it is based on too narrow a definition of proficiency to be used to develop standardized proficiency tests which can be broadly applied to all students, particularly those who intend to pursue academic careers in Canada. Hence, problems with the CLBA…". This wording may be misleading to some readers who are not familiar with the CLBA, and who might assume that the test developers have indicated that academic admission is an appropriate use for the assessment. In their "Report on the Development of the CLBA", which can be found in the Introduction Booklet (available through CLTA, p. 3), Norton and Stewart clearly state that the purpose of the assessment is "to help place learners across the country in instructional programmes appropriate for their level of competence in English". Similarly, in their article in the TESL Canada Journal (14, 2, 28), Norton and Stewart state that the CLBA "remains a low-stakes work in progress, representing one contribution to nationwide attempts to improve the language learning opportunities and integration of new Canadians". It is important to note that high-stakes applications such as academic admissions have never been suggested by the test developers. Thus, the comment by Hyland and Lee that many of the tasks in the CLBA "may be suitable only for placement into classes" is not a defensible criticism of the assessment, but rather an observation that the CLBA fulfils the application for which it was designed.

Since Hyland and Lee do not provide any reference for their assertion that "by describing a dual purpose for the CLB (i.e., proficiency and placement assessment), the test developers have undermined its effectiveness", it is difficult to speculate as to how they might have arrived at such a conclusion. It is important to remember that the developers of the CLBA are responsible only for the design and content of the assessment. They have never taken on the responsibility of describing the purpose of the CLB document, nor do they make it their concern to dictate other potential applications for the Canadian Language Benchmarks. Furthermore, as stated above, there has never been any suggested purpose for the CLBA other than ESL classroom placement.

Their description of CLBA tasks is not always accurate. For example, the article describes a writing task which "asks students to describe a picture by writing text underneath it". No such task exists in the CLBA.

In their article, Hyland and Lee describe the content of the CLBA, considered a secure test, in some detail. Their description of CLBA tasks is not always accurate. For example, the article describes a writing task which "asks students to describe a picture by writing text underneath it". No such task exists in the CLBA. In describing the communicative nature of the tasks, the article states that no instructions are attached to the Task B Writing form. In fact, each Task B of each form and stage of the test is accompanied by a statement of instructions for completing the form.

We hope that the information in this letter will serve to eliminate any confusion on the part of those who may have read the article by Hyland and Lee, but who are not familiar with the CLBA.

Gail Stewart (CLBA Test Developer) and Carolyn Cohen (CLBA Project Manager)

Check Your Internet Sources

The Internet has become a major supplier of sources, facts, quotes, statistics and content for English language students. It may be prudent to take students and fellow educators through the following items to inspect their Internet sources before they use it as a source for their information.

Initial Impression

Does the content meet your initial expectations based on the description or input keywords from the search engine? Often empty-headed sites or sites with alterior motives use misleading keywords to lure "honest" surfers to their sites. Students should be taught to take an initial inventory of the Web site. If it is not presented well and the information seems to be directed at another audience, or is incomplete, then they should simply hit the back button on the browser's toolbar and return to the search engine.

Author

Students should rummage through the homepage of any site for the name of the author whose source they are citing. The author's name should be conveniently displayed on the opening page of the Web site and on any subsequent pages. One should be able to e-mail the author from the Web page. Also, legitimate web sources provide a Web page dedicated to the author's biography, credentials, educational background, past writings, or experience in the subject area. Using the author's page, students can determine if the content is written on a topic in the author's area of expertise. Credible sources will also provide links to their personal published papers and books.

Students can also perform a basic self-check by remembering if this author's name arose during class time. Also, the students can ask relevant faculty if they recognize the author's name. Students can check the authenticity of an author by searching for their names in other web or traditional publications since reputable authors are often quoted in a variety of sources.

Bias

Bias is a common problem found in many articles or papers published on the Internet. Students can be made aware in emotion-rousing words in biased texts. Self-publishing through a personal Web site offers the first clue. Students should first look for obvious prejudice or bias on issues on Web sites. Articles from personal web sites are often not refereed. To identify these sites students can look for three obvious signs of vanity web publishing. First determine if there is a ~ character in the URL. It precedes a person's username in large institutions. Also look for URLs that have large free-Internet-service-providers. These can include Yahoo, Angel Fire or Geocities. Bias can also be determined by examining the URL's extension. For example "mil" denotes a military server or "gov" indicates an American government server.

Bias is a common problem found on many articles or papers published on the Internet. Articles from personal web sites are often not refereed. Also look for URLs that have large free-Internet-service-providers.

An author can also be writing for an organization with a set agenda. Students should determine if the author is associated with an organization or institution. Banner advertisements are often means of determining this alliance. If the student is reading an article on gun control in the United States, and the banner is advertising ammunition, then the student should note the bias. The article may appear on an organization's Web page.

A third way to determine an author-association linkage is to use the web service at www.netcraft.com. Placing the Web site's URL in the NetCraft search area will provide the student with critical information about the Web site, including what person or organization owns the site's "Net Block." That is, the student can determine the real owner of the Web site. This is not an exact science since dubious organisations can still cloak their Net Blocks with third party company names. In NetCraft, one can also view what other sites are owned within this Net Block which can reveal surprising dispositions. In an advanced writing class, we determined that many of the pro-gun lobby's Web sites are owned within the same Net Block. Once the Web site's owners are found the student should determine

Placing the Web site's URL in the NetCraft search area will provide the student with critical information about the Web site, including what person or organization owns the site's "Net Block." That is, the student can determine the real owner of the Web site.

the basic values or goals of the organization or institution.

One consistent pattern that many biased Web sites employ is the repetition of a few key points throughout an essay, article, or paper. Make students aware of this.

Quality

Information should appear to be valid and well-researched. Sometimes it is questionable and unsupported by evidence or sources. Articles rife with errors or omissions should be disregarded as irrelevant. Students should be able to determine if the information covered in the article includes opinions, facts or propaganda. They should be able to verify facts through Internet searches or sources provided by the author.

Students should be able to determine if the information covered in the article includes opinions, facts or propaganda. They should be able to verify facts through Internet searches or sources provided by the author.

Quality can be determined in a variety of other ways. If the paper or article was refereed then the dates and biographies of the listing of the referees should be displayed. A bibliography page should also be available with a web page of relevant Internet links to further readings on both sides of the subject.

Timely

Students should search for a time stamp of the last update of the Web site. If the subject requires an annual update, the Web site should have the last update prominently posted on the main page.

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Workmanship

A well-laid out site with logically-organized division headings and subheadings and consistent navigation helps one determine if a great deal of planning and thought have gone into the site. Poor spelling and orphaned links should alert the student that the author of this Web site may have just thrown it up in the heat of the moment and this may be reflected in the site's content.

Comparison

Students should not just use one source to generate data and facts for their papers. They should be encouraged to compare the Web site's information with other traditional and possibly electronic sources before they start writing their paper.

Humour

Students should also be made aware of the satirical sites on the web that cover serious topics. Students can find The Onion and Frank magazine through Internet searches. Teachers can help by guiding students through one of these on-line magazines, pointing out the flagrant embellishment that is characteristic of these publications.

Appreciation of these issues may help your students while researching for data on the Internet. In most cases students will not check each source against this list but awareness of fraudulent or biased information will help the students be more discriminating while they research papers in the future.

John Allan
Abu Dhabi Men's Higher College
of Technology
U.A.E.

The Provincial Exemplar Project: Assessment in Secondary ESL

Assessment, evaluation, standards, achievement levels, and expectations are all terms that come together in the Exemplar Project. The Exemplar project has been created by the Ministry of Education to help teachers improve their assessment methods and strategies in order to comply with the new assessment directive in Secondary School Reform. According to the new policy, teachers must now use assessment and evaluation strategies that are based on both the curriculum expectations and the four categories of achievement for each subject in the achievement chart. Adherence should lead to province-wide standards in assessment and evaluation of student achievement.

Exemplars (models of student work) were created for all of the grade 9 compulsory subjects and a few others including one ESL and one ELD. It was a huge undertaking lasting more than a year; the exemplars were released only in late November, 2000. Tasks for the different subjects were designed by groups of teachers, field tested around the province and scored by teachers in spring and summer, 2000. Exemplars are actually samples of student work (product, presentation) that demonstrate a single achievement level for each of the four categories in the achievement chart. It was difficult in the scoring phase finding samples of student work that were consistently a level 3 or a level 2 across all four categories of *knowledge, thinking, communication and application*. Normally, students are stronger or weaker in at least one category.

Taking part in the Ministry-sponsored exemplar training turned out to be a worthwhile experience. Paula Markus, project manager of the ESL Profiles and the ESL Exemplars, led our group of Eastern Ontario teachers through the ESLA0 and ELDA0 (beginning level) exemplars in late November. We examined and discussed performance tasks and rubrics for ESLA and ELDA before scoring the writing samples ourselves. An abbreviated form of the training for ESLA0 follows:

We examined the task.

Student Writing Task: A Composition about a New Canadian

Description of the Task

Students were asked to conduct a brief interview with an immigrant to Canada, asking at least ten questions. They were then to write a short, structured, chronologically-organized composition describing this person's life, explaining why this person's story is important to them. (The term 'composition' is used in the expectations for the writing strand of the course, and implies a group of sentences about a topic.)

Final Product

The final product is a short, structured, chronologically-organized composition written during a class period.

A discussion followed about the characteristics of a good performance task:

- It allows students to demonstrate a cluster of expectations.
- It is relevant to the student.
- It is an engaging task that encourages higher-level thinking.
- It is open-ended enough to allow for a full range of performance.

We then read about all of the preparation leading up to the performance or assessment task – prior knowledge, student instructions, check list, model paragraphs and interview questions, pre-task writing and feedback, and the rubric that accompanied the task. In short, students were primed for success.

Next, we examined the rubric for the task, which included the stated expectations in appropriate categories. As a group, we modified the language of the criteria to make it student-friendly. We then completed the four levels with appropriate descriptors such as limited, or rarely, for level 1; some, for level 2; considerable for level 3, the standard or goal; and thorough, for level 4.

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Creating a Rubric for the Task (it is easy to complete with the hints provided)

Categories/Criteria	Level 1 'Limited'	Level 2 'Some'	Level 3 'Considerable'	Level 4 'Thorough' 'High degree'
Knowledge/ Understanding Demonstrates knowledge of simple verb tenses in English (Past, Present, Future)	demonstrates limited knowledge of verb tenses	demonstrates some knowledge of verb tenses	demonstrates knowledge by using most verbs accurately	demonstrates knowledge by using all or almost all verbs accurately
Thinking Uses accurate chronological order in the composition orders info. chrono-	logically with limited accuracy orders info. chronologically	with some accuracy *Communication* Writes sentences		
that are complete and correctly formed writes a few complete and correctly	formed sentences Communicates personal relevance			
in the writing communicates the personal relevance	of the story with limited effectiveness *Application*			
Uses language conventions accurately (spelling, capitals, periods) Uses language conven-	tions with limited accuracy			

Armed with our rubric, we examined writing in this order – two examples of level 3 writing, two examples of level 2, two examples of level 1 and two examples of level 4.

ESL teachers should be encouraged to collect samples of student work at all of the ESL levels they are teaching. Exemplars are a good way to begin a unit to show students what good work looks like; they encourage consistency and reliability in scoring among colleagues.

Next Steps

Armed with our rubric, we examined writing in this order – two examples of level 3 writing, two examples of level 2, two examples of level 1 and two examples of level 4. In all cases, we discussed why the sample was designated to its particular level and what we might suggest for next steps. We then examined random unmarked pieces of student writing. To our surprise, we were fairly consistent in our marking. The practice marking and the task –specific rubric were key, we believed, to our common results.

Conclusions

We all agreed that good performance tasks were the way to assess our multi-level ESL classes and that preparing for the test demonstrated sound teaching practice. Using task-specific rubrics was also a way to improve student learning. As a result of this project, ESL teachers should be encouraged to collect samples of student work at all of the ESL levels they are teaching. Exemplars are a good way to begin a unit to show students what good work looks like; they encourage consistency and reliability in scoring among colleagues.

They can be used with students and parents to help students set goals for improvement. Students themselves can use exemplars to understand the goal. Exemplars will also help them develop an awareness of levels 3 and 4.

I am reminded of two statements by Grant Wiggins when I think of the benefits of using exemplars in our teaching.

If we expect students to do excellent work, we must show them examples of excellent work.

A student can hit any target he can see and as long as it's standing still.

Exemplars can become our students' targets and a strategy for improving their learning.

Jill Doherty
Ottawa Carleton District School Board

Students themselves can use exemplars to understand the goal.

Visit our website
www.teslontario.org

Membership Report

Great news! In the past year the membership in TESL Ontario has increased from 1,300 to 2,000.

In recognition of this achievement the 2,000th member, Murray McMaster, a student from Barrie, Ontario, was awarded a year's free membership at the TESL Ontario Conference in November.

This increase in membership is a result of the TESL Certification requirements and the continuing efforts of the affiliate membership secretaries at promoting membership at the local level.

Keep in mind the upcoming deadlines for the TESL Certification of Adult ESL Instructors are June 1 and October 1, 2001.

Joyce Ivison
Membership Secretary

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Language Profile

Dear Colleagues,

So far in this series the following languages have been profiled: Persian, Tamil, Arabic, Somali, Spanish, Tgringa, Amharic, Turkish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Polish, Russian/Ukrainian, Hebrew, Panjabi and Hindi, Tagalog, Albanian and Croatian/Serbian/Bosnian. In this issue a language from Europe is being profiled – Armenian. I would like to thank Seza Sarmazian and her community for providing the following information on this language.

This profile marks the first in a series of profiles that look at our heritage languages and not necessarily one that reflects a recent influx of refugees. However, it does not mean that the original immigrants did not arrive as refugees when they came to Canada. Their children and great/grand children may no longer be in need of ESL, so it is a salute to our legions of ESL professionals who helped welcome their predecessors and aided them on their road to enriching our Canadian mosaic.

We may no longer be seen as just volunteers working out of church basements but are recognized and respected professionals (even if our classrooms are still in church basements) who continue to make a difference in a new immigrant's life. Therefore, I dedicate this heritage profile to all past, present and future ESL professionals – you have been, are, and will remain excellent ambassadors for Canada.

Armenian was the second profile I engaged in 10 years ago following Persian. Many times I have gone back to the original notes and added to them so this profile has certainly been on my mind for a long time. It is a profile that has certainly stirred my emotions, as much as did the Albanian and Hebrew ones.

Armenian was the second profile I engaged in 10 years ago following Persian. Many times I have gone back to the original notes and added to them so this profile has certainly been on my mind for a long time. It is a profile that has certainly stirred my emotions, as much as did the Albanian and Hebrew ones. Both groups are nearly extinct as their cultures have been reduced to pale remnants of their former glory safeguarded by their Diaspora. These 2 groups could have easily joined the archives of extinct languages with the destruction of their people.

Cathy Haghighat

Armenian

BACKGROUND

HISTORY

The first period of prosperity occurred on the Armenian upland in the third millennium BCE. These people were among the first to forge bronze, invent the wheel, and cultivate grapes.

Archaeology has extended the prehistory of Armenia to 500,000 years ago when hunters and gatherers crossed the lands. The first period of prosperity occurred on the Armenian upland in the third millennium BCE. These people were among the first to forge bronze, invent the wheel, and cultivate grapes. The first written records to mention the inhabitants of Armenia come from hieroglyphs of the Hittite Kingdom, inscribed 1388 to 1347 BCE in Asia Minor. The earliest inscription found directly on Armenian lands was carved in 1114 BCE by the Assyrians and described a coalition of kings referring to them as "the people of Nairi." It is also believed that the Armenians originated in Thrace and Phyrgia, crossed the Euphrates and invaded Asia Minor in the 2nd millennium before Christ, and by the 8th Century BCE, after intermarriage with the Assyrians, Armenian became the language of that area.

Armenians tell the tale of their hero *Hayk*, great-grandson of Noah. This legendary hero refused to be subjugated by the Babylonian Bel and led his people into a new land to be free. There he established the Kingdom of Armenia in the area of Lake Van. Bel attacked but was defeated in the 3rd millennium BCE. *Hayk* became the Armenian patriarch. Thus, Armenians called themselves *Hay* and their country *Hayastan*. *Hayk* was the son of *Tokarma* whose name means "race (*Toka*)," and *Arma* is a proper name for "Aram" or "Amen". Fifth century historian Movses Khorenatsi also relates the valiant deeds of an Aram whose fame extended far beyond his country. Consequently, the neighboring nations called the people "Armens" or "Armenians." The Bisitun inscription of the Persian king Darius I (520 BCE) also refers to *Armina* (Armenia).

The land is believed by Armenians to be the location of the Garden of Eden. Yet, there was certainly trouble in Paradise. Geographically, Armenia has been a bridge between east and west, a link between Rome and the Byzantine Empires, and this was its source of trouble. In ancient times it was constantly embroiled in foreign conflicts by powers searching to subjugate it. Centuries of Byzantine, Ottoman and Persian conquerors jeopardized the very existence of the Armenian nation and, at times, their religion. By 550 BCE, Armenia became part of the Median empire which in turn was annexed by Cyrus II the Great to form part of the Achaemenian Empire of Persia. By 400 BCE, Armenia was in the hands of *nakharars* whose tribute to the Persian king consisted of horses, silver, rugs and military supplies. Armenia continued to be governed by Persian or native *satraps* until the conquest of Alexander the Great (331 BCE). Then after the defeat of the Seleucid king, Antiochus the Great, by Rome at the Battle of Magnesia (190 -189 BCE), his two Armenian satraps, Artashes and Zareh, became kings of Greater Armenia and Sophene, and thus, became the creators of an independent Armenia. The unification of Armenia from an eastern and a western part was made by Tigran II the Great. This unification lasted almost 500 years. At the time of this "king of kings," the Armenian empire stretched from the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean. The renaissance of Armenia was accomplished during his reign. Armenia grew to a great military power with political influence. Cicero, the Roman orator and politician, wrote, "He made the Republic of Rome tremble before the powers of his arms." Tigran's victories, however, hastened his downfall in 66 BCE. His son King Artavazd II governed Greater Armenia for 20 years until Anthony and Cleopatra had him brought to Egypt in chains. Artavazd refused to name Cleopatra his queen and was subsequently executed.

Although Armenian culture at the time of Tigran II was Persian, Hellenic scholars and actors were welcomed at the Armenian court. The fifth century CE., following the conversion to Christianity, is considered Armenia's Golden Age of arts and letters.

Armenia became a split state of Greater (east) and Lesser (west) Armenia of either the Byzantine or Parthian empire with periods of independence until 1242 when the whole of Armenia and Georgia fell into the hands of the Mongols, and Greater Armenia lost what independence it once held. In 1255, King Hetum opened a trade route to China, the route Marco Polo followed as he passed through Armenia on his way to meet Kubla Khan.

As Armenia played a major role in the Crusades, Lesser Armenia became allied with the West, and, through intermarriage with French crusading families, French religious, political, and cultural influence became widespread. Following further struggles with the Mameluks, the title "King of Armenia" was passed on to the kings of Cyprus, then to the Venetians and later to the house of Savoy. From the 11th to the 15th century, the Armenians migrated to Europe, Asia and Africa and settled in Egypt.

From 1375-1918, Armenia was subjugated by the Turks. From this time, Armenia was under the domination of the Ottomans and Safavids. After the capture of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks, Armenians, as Christians, were at a disadvantage. Yet they retained the status of *zimms (dhimmi)* or "People of the Book," the management of their own affairs in what would later be known as the millet system. By the late 18th century, the Armenian patriarch of Constantinople headed the Armenian community (the "*ermeni millet*") although the *amira* (wealthy Armenians) and *sarafs* (moneylenders) usually controlled his election and administration. The number of Armenians increased at the beginning of the 16th century by the Ottoman conquest of Cilicia and Greater Armenia. Eastern (Greater) Armenia was annexed by Russia during the 19th century while western (Lesser) Armenia remained under Turkish rule.

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Armenians were oppressed and persecuted by their Turkish overlords and Russian Tsars. In Russia both Tsar Alexander III and his son Nicholas II closed hundreds of Armenian schools, libraries and newspaper offices. In 1903 Nicholas confiscated the property of the Armenian church. Armenians were removed from civil service, and church properties were placed under government management. It is also suspected that the Russian governor general was behind the pogroms of the Baku oil fields in 1905 which left hundreds dead.

On April 22, 1918, Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan formed the Transcaucasian Federal Republic which was short lived. The portion of

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Armenia within the former Russian Empire declared independence on May 28,1918 but in 1920 was invaded by Turkey and Soviet Russia. The Soviet Republic of Armenia was established on November 29, 1920. In 1922 Armenia became part of the Transcaucasian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic. But in 1936 this republic was dissolved with Armenia becoming a republic of the Soviet Union. Finally, following the collapse of Soviet Russia, Armenia became an independent sovereign state on September 23, 1991.

Margaret Mead, the great anthropologist, once suggested making Armenian an international language due to its simplicity and ease of acquisition.

Five kingdoms have existed in Armenia in its almost 3,000 years of history. There are 2,760 fountains in Yerevan for each year of its existence.

LANGUAGE

Margaret Mead, the great anthropologist, once suggested making Armenian an international language due to its simplicity and ease of acquisition.

Armenian is spoken by almost 3 million people in Armenia and 1.5 million in Azerbaijan (after 1990 1/5th fled the country), Georgia and other former Soviet States. Armenian emigres and refugees took their language with them to Asia Minor and the Middle East. There are also large pockets of Armenian speakers in Romania, Poland, France and the U.S.(1 million). The Diaspora number 3 million worldwide.

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Conversion to Christianity produced the need for Armenian to take a written form. Mesrop (Saint) Mashtos invented the original alphabet of 36 letters in 405 CE with 3 letters added at a later date (Mashtos also produced a script for the Georgians and Albanians). The first piece of literature written in Armenian was a translation of the Bible from Greek. This was followed by translations of the Greek philosophers, theologians and politicians. An early original piece, "David of Sassoun," reflected a style equal to the Greek masters. In the 19th century, the nationalistic writers Khachatur Abovean and Mikael Nalbandean, among others, encouraged a reformation of written Grabar to a modern Armenian form that could be reflected in a common spoken form as Grabar no longer had a recognizable spoken one. At the same time these intellectuals purged Armenian of Turkish, Persian and Arabic loan words. (The only Persian loan words that remained were those that entered Armenian prior to Armenia's conversion to Christianity and the adoption of a written form). The result was Eastern and Western Armenian, the two main mutually intelligible dialects.

TYPES OF ARMENIAN

Grabar = classical form
- no longer used as spoken form after 12th century
- only used for liturgy of the Armenian Church in the same way Latin was used by the Roman Catholic Church.

Modern Armenian = Ashksarhik or Ashksarhaban used for literature and speaking - has 2 main dialects (Eastern and Western Armenian)

Eastern Armenian = state language of Armenia - also spoken in Iran, Georgia and Azerbaijan
- based on the dialect of the Tiflis group of the Caucasus, the Ararat Valley and the city of Yerevan
- heavily influenced by Russian

Western Armenian = Diaspora that originated in the Ottoman Empire and travelled to the Middle East, Asia Minor, Europe, North America
- mildly influenced by European languages

EAST and WEST ARMENIA

Before the conversion of Armenia to Christianity the chiefs of Armenian clans – *nakharars* – held great power in Armenia and controlled the influence of the king. This time period can be likened to the time of England and the Magna Carta. It was their dissatisfaction with Arshak II that led to the division of Armenia into two sections, Byzantine Armenia and Persarmenia in 390 CE. The former division comprised about one-fifth of Armenia and was absorbed into the Byzantine state. To it, the Armenians contributed many emperors and generals. The latter division, Persarmenia, continued to be ruled by an Arsacid until the replacement by

a Persian governor requested by the *nakharars* in 428. Even by destroying their country's sovereignty, a sense of national unity sprang from the development of an Armenian alphabet and a national Christian literature. Culturally, the 5th century was Armenia's Golden Age. Although Byzantine assimilated the Armenians, the Persians were not as successful most probably as the Byzantines and Armenians shared the same religion.

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	ENGLISH	ARMENIAN
LANGUAGE FAMILY	Indo - European (Germanic branch)	Indo - European (sole survivor of Thraco-Phrygian sub family)

Armenian is an agglutinative language which means its vocabulary is composed of suffixes and prefixes added to a root that produces compound words to reflect meaning.

EX: the root word ***hantes*** = gathering; *tashta**hantes*** = field gathering = picnic; *bara**hantes*** = dance gathering = party

WRITING SYSTEM	- alphabet, Latin script	- alphabet
	- non-phonetic	- phonetic
	- written from left to right	- written from left to right
	- letters disconnected	- letters disconnected
	- printed/written script	- printed/written script

The script itself is unique and is based on the Greek unicals and the Armazi version of the Aramaic script.

# OF LETTERS	26	39 (36 originally) 22 based on Greek letters
VOWELS	15-16 (spoken) 6 (written)	7 + 4 diphthongs
DIFFERENT CONSONANTS	TH(this/the)/NG(sing)	gh/kh/ts and 2 r's - both trilled but one is weaker

There are 6 pairs of letters that only differ slightly in pronunciation and aspiration. There is also a letter that is rarely written except when it occurs in the initial position, compounds or hyphenated words even though it is a common spoken vowel.

Armenian is an agglutinative language which means its vocabulary is composed of suffixes and prefixes added to a root that produces compound words to reflect meaning.

CAPITALIZATION	- begin new sentences with capitals	- begin new sentences with capitals
COMBINATION OF LETTERS	- each syllable has a vowel/consonant sound	- each syllable has vowel/consonant sound
		- syllables begin with consonant
	- many consonant clusters	- consonant + vowel combination

Stress is placed on the last full syllable.

NUMBERS	- written from left to right	- written from left to right but chapter numbers in books use letters of the Armenian alphabet
		- each letter of the alphabet can represent a number much like Hebrew

		ENGLISH	ARMENIAN
ORDER		- subject + verb + object	- subject + verb + object for written but colloquial uses
sentence		- time words appear at the end or beginning of the sentence	object + verb + subject suffix - time words appear at the beginning of the sentence or are affixed to the verb for tense
adjective		- adjective + noun	- adjective + noun
NOUNS		- a, an, the - indefinite - a, an + noun - definite - the + noun	- 6 - 7 cases of declension of nouns - compounds show meaning
VERBS		- subject is separate - verb only inflected for some verbs (to be) and in some tenses (to have) - continuous/present)	- subject is suffixed to the verb

Armenian verbs can be broken into 3 types depending on their ending, much like French – the -*yell*, -*ill* and -*all*.

Armenian verbs can be broken into 3 types depending on their ending, much like French – the -*yell*, -*ill* and -*all*.

The past tense takes the stem and adds suffixes that belong to that type ending and then add the person suffix. Thus, verb tenses are conjugated into 3 families.

Present, future and perfect tenses use an auxiliary tense stem + verb stem + person suffix.

The verb stem remains the same for all verbs.

PRONOUNS	- subject	- always written	- only written for emphasis
	- object	- differs from subject	- differs from subject
		- appears after the verb	- appears before the verb
	- possessive(adj)	- differs from the above - appears before the noun	- noun + suffix

Armenian uses postpositions that follow the word instead of prepositions.

PLURALS	- adds suffix s/es/ies	- singular stem of noun + (n)er and then declined as singular noun
TENSES	- has a few irregular forms - 3 forms of the verb, present, past, past part. - tenses changed by + ed, or whole word,or use of "to be"/"to have"	- 3 forms of the verb
COMMANDS	- infinitive form of the verb - uses punctuation of	- stem + person suffix
? FORM	- question word/auxiliary verb - verb + subject/question word	- question word/intonation - is used for a period is used for a colon is used for a semi comma a floating uncrossed 'f' is used for an exclamation mark
NEGATIVE FORM	- use auxiliary verbs - to be + not	- negative prefix ***'me'*** + verb

	ENGLISH	ARMENIAN
VERB/2ND VERB	- verb + to + infinitive	- verb + infinitive
MODALS	- modal + infinitive (no "to")	- modal + person suffix + infinitive
FORMALITY LEVELS	- 3 levels - levels changed by use of modals and longer sentence structures	- 2 levels - informal/formal similar to French *vous* and *tu*
SWEARING/OATHS	- involves the subjects of sex/bodily functions	- no swear words exist in Armenian as it is a liturgical language - use Turkish words concerning animals/family especially mother and sister
VOCABULARY/ FOREIGN INFLUENCE	- higher level of writing - Greek/ Latin	- Persian, from their domination before and after Christ - Greek/Syriac, from Christian influence - French, from the Crusades - Turkish, from the Ottoman rule
LEARNING OF WRITING/READING	- word recognition, phonics, syllables	- phonics

Because of the number of Persian loan words, linguists originally believed that Armenian was a Persian dialect.

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HOLIDAYS

Christmas

The majority of Armenians are Orthodox, so Christmas is celebrated on January 6th, the Epiphany, the Birth and Baptism of Christ.

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St. Vartan's Day

In late February or early March is St .Vartan's Day. This celebrates the 451 CE resistance by the leader Vartan to the Persian king Yazdegerd II who attempted to forcefully convert them to Zoroastrianism. The commander, Vartan Mamikonian, and his followers were slain at the Battle of Avarayr defending Armenian Christianity. The Persian king, however, renounced his plan to convert Armenia. Later in the revolt of 481-484 led by Vahan Mamikonian, Vartan's nephew secured religious and political freedom for Armenia through the *Nvarsag Treaty* in return for military aid to Persia.

Memorial Day/Martyr's Day

April 24th is the memorial day of the Armenian massacre in 1915.

Independence Day

May 28 is Independence Day which celebrated the freeing of Armenia in 1918 until it fell under Soviet rule in 1924. On September 23rd, 1991 Armenia became independent once again.

Sardarabad Day

It is celebrated in May to commemorate victory over the Turkish army in the Battle of Sardarabad (May 22 - May 26) 1918.

Cultural Month

October is celebrated as cultural month.

NAMES

An easily recognizable feature of an Armenian family name is the *-ian* or *yan* ending meaning "of" or "from." For example, the singer Cher's family name is Sarkiss**an**.

Biblical names, such as Hagop (Jacob) or Hovsep (Joseph), famous writers and poets are favourite names as well as names taken from rivers, lakes and mountains.

ARTS/LETTERS

Literary giants include Nerscs, Grigor, Constantine of Erznka, Sayat Nova, Abovian, Alishan, Beshigtashlian, Nalbandian, Turian, Raffi, Sundukian, Baronian, Tumanian, Isahakian, Medzarents, Siamanto, Varazhan, Terian, Mekhitarist Fathers, Choohajian, Sevak, Emin, Shiraz and Charents.

The first form of poetry was that of the hymn. The greatest form of this work is Grigor of Nanek's 'Nanek.'

In the 19th century, with a renaissance of culture and politics, Armenian Catholic Monasteries were opened in Venice and Vienna.

Canadian-Armenians: Andrea Martin, Raffi, Yousuf Karsh and Atom Egoyan

BOOK OF NOAH

In Movses Khorenatsy's 5th century book, 'the History of Armenia' he referred to the Greek chronicler, Olimpiodoros, of how Armenians of old sang and danced the legend of Ksisutrios, and how his sons drifted to Armenia and met the land. Ksisutrios is another name for Noah. The creation of the epic is based on the fact that the Armenian ancestor, Hayk, depicted in the last of the epic, lived approximately four and a half thousand years ago.

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The manuscript of the epic is over 3,000 pages long. Originally, the epic was rhythmic. It recants a flood that occurred 4,500 years ago. The epic is divided into 4 parts.

In the conclusion of Noah's epic, his mace is passed down to his son Habet. Later, his descendant Torgom marries the goddess Anahit, and they have a son, Hayk, ancestor of the Armenians. It is Hayk that creates the calendar, and in his death becomes a constellation, Orion.

Later, his descendant Torgom marries the goddess Anahit, and they have a son, Hayk, ancestor of the Armenians. It is Hayk that creates the calendar, and in his death becomes a constellation, Orion.

It is little wonder, then, that the state emblem of Armenia has a picture of Mount Ararat with Noah's ark atop it.

EDUCATION

Eight years of schooling is mandatory and free for the ages 6 to 16. This is followed by trade schools and specialized secondary educational schools and then post secondary educational institutions.

Armenia enjoys a roughly 90% literacy rate with the majority of the population having post secondary education. At any given time a third of the population is studying. Education and reading are so important that Yerevan has 119 libraries, 200 schools and has published 11 million books with 1,100 titles. In Armenia children study English, French, Italian, Spanish and German. Russian is spoken widely. Children studying in Armenian schools in Ontario study in 3 languages - Armenian, French and English.

RELIGION

The Armenians of the 5th century BCE adopted the Persian Zoroastrianism of Ahura -–Mazda. Their favoured goddess was Anahit, mother of wisdom and goddess of fertility. With the coming of Alexander the Great, Armenians worshipped the divinities of the pantheon and renamed their gods. Anahit became Athena, Ahura-Mazda, Zeus.

Tradition holds that Christianity was introduced by Sts. Bartholomew (the Apostle) and Thaddeus (one of the Seventy) to King Abgarus of Edessa. Tertullian, in his 'Answer to the Jews,' includes the Armenians among the very first Christians from the day of the Pentecost.

The Armenian chronicler Agathangelos told the story of the conversion of the Armenians by St. Gregory. In 287 CE, King Trdat of Armenia renewed the persecution of the Christians. St. Gregory Partev was the son of the Armenian prince, Anak, who had killed King Trdat's father. In punishment, Anak and his family were executed. Only Gregory escaped. He was offered asylum by the archbishop of Caesarea and was brought up as a Christian. Gregory returned to Armenia to evangelize. Upon discovery by the king, he was cast into a pit. He survived there for fifteen years. The king continued his persecutions until stricken with lycanthropy. On the urging of his Christian sister, Trdat ordered Gregory released and brought before him. Trdat was healed and converted by Gregory. In 301 CE, Armenia became the first state under St. Gregory to accept Christianity as its state religion.

Gregory went to the archbishop of Caesarea for ordination and episcopal consecration. He returned to Armenia and was chosen *catholicos* (head) of the Armenian church. A cathedral was built in the capital Vagharshapat a few miles

outside of present-day Yerevan. Echmiadzin, the name of this site, was made the place of the Holy See of the *Catholicos* and Supreme Patriarch of All Armenians.

The conversion to Christianity is what made Armenians Armenian and kept them so. If perhaps they had remained Zoroastrian or had converted to Islam at a later date, considering their geographical location and historical conflicts, they would have been assimilated, and their nation would have joined the ranks of the ancient Hittites/ Assyrians that they had intermarried with.

HIGHLIGHTS

The architects of Top Kapi (St. Sophia) in Istanbul were Armenians. They were also involved in the construction of the Holy Sepulchre, the church site of Jesus's crucifixion, burial and resurrection.

In 1562 the first Christian church was opened in China by Armenians.

Coffee was introduced to Paris by Patrick the Armenian who then established the first café.

RESOURCES

Armenian Community Centre
45 Hallcrown Pl.
Willowdale

(416) 491-2900

The Alex Manougian Centre
930 Progress Ave.
Toronto

(416) 431-2428

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Social Justice as a Way of Life: a Tribute to the Legacy of Nancy Pocock, 1910-98

"I have always had the sneaking feeling that if people would listen to me, we could solve a lot of problems."

For many of us, the name, Nancy Pocock inspires a feeling of awe and affection. As ESL teachers through the '80s and early '90s, we have heard her name mentioned again and again in connection to her work with refugees. However, since her death in 1998, this memory has become less vivid. Now that we are preoccupied with new curriculum demands, cuts to funding and the very survival of ESL programs, we tend to forget her legacy. So, for those of us who remember her, and for those of you who are newer to the profession, I would like to review her life and work, both to inspire us to continue our work and to honour her name.

First of all, Nancy's activism did not begin with helping refugees. It goes back to the 1920s, covering different continents and peoples from all over the world. Born in the United States, Nancy came to live in Toronto with her parents. As a Unitarian minister and teacher, her father taught at the University of Toronto.

"My real life began in Toronto," says Nancy. At that time, in the '20s, Toronto was very dull, according to her. She wanted to be an artist and went to the Ontario College of Art to design jewelry. Her life began to expand when she went to Iraq with her father and later spent the summer in Paris studying jewelry. While in Europe, she spoke to Germans recovering from World War I. With an open mind typical of Nancy, she became interested in the reasons for war and wanted to hear both sides. She returned to Toronto to open a studio on Gerrard Street, at that time known as the "artist district."

She visited Vietnam four times and went to the Killing Fields in Cambodia.

Once the Depression hit, Nancy met many men who were "riding the rails" looking for work. Nancy acted a pattern that would last all her life. It wasn't enough just to believe in justice. She had to act personally. She began to champion their cause, sometimes taking them in to stay at her studio. At that time as well, she became more interested in pacifism, joining a youth group at the United Church where she could express her views. The group had "long sessions on how to avoid the war." In a revealing statement, Nancy said, "I have always had the sneaking feeling that if people would listen to me, we could solve a lot of problems."

With the onset of world War II, the transient men were all drafted. Then two more events happened that would shape Nancy's life. She met her husband-to-be, Jack Pocock, and joined the Friends Service Committee. Jack became her partner and companion for the next 32 years. Together, they developed their pacifism, sought to help the 'outcasts of society' around the world, and continued their work together as artists.

In the Quaker faith, followers are guided by the Spirit, an inner voice, not a minister. This Spirit appealed to Nancy, and throughout her life her spirituality and faith deepened. It lead her to one adventure after another. Her daughter explained that Quakers believe that "sin can be overcome in this life." So it was a good fit for Nancy's active pacifism, and gave her a niche where she could really make a difference.

The next years of Nancy's involvement reflect a catalogue of the turmoil in the world in the late '50s and early '60s. When the U2 incident happened, she argued for nuclear disarmament. She helped found the Voice of Women, a group who brought delegations of women from the Soviet Union and Vietnam to Canada to hear their point of view. Though she was accused of being a communist, she did not stop. She visited Vietnam four times and went to the Killing Fields in Cambodia. During the Vietnam War, she took American draft dodgers and deserters into her house and then brought Vietnamese refugees to Canada. Sadly, her husband Jack died before the Vietnam War ended.

It was then, her daughter said, that Nancy's private life began to blend with her public life. She seemed to spend more and more time on the issues of war and violence. She went to Europe as a member of the Prisoner Committee at an Emergency Conference on Vietnam, and then, back in Canada, began to help native people with their land claims. She returned to Vietnam and Thai-

land to visit refugee camps and see the clinic that she had started.

Finally in the late '70s she met Claire Galbraith at the Friends Service Committee who asked, "What are you doing about the Salvadorean refugees in Canada?" Thus began the chapter of Nancy's life that we know her best for – when, in her 60s and 70s, she became "Mama Nancy" to the many refugees fleeing from political violence and persecution in Central America.

She would go to meet refugees coming from Dallas, Texas, often at the Canadian border, bringing them to the Friends House for lunch. Then they would come to Thursday night meetings for Spanish-speaking refugees. There, they received counselling and settlement help. Word spread far and wide about this amazing woman who wrote letters, advocated tenaciously and always had time to listen, day or night. Eventually, Nancy became so busy that she had to move her centre of activity to her own house. That is where it has remained until recently. There, according to her assistant, Eusabio Garcia, she could do "her own thing in her way that she knew best." Again Nancy felt she had been guided by the Spirit. "The more refugees I met and the more I found out, the more it seemed to me that this was the work the Lord meant me to do."

At this time (the late '80s and early '90s) there were many organizations working together to help refugees, including the Toronto Refugee Affairs Council (or TRAC, as some of you know) and the Inter-Church Committee for Refugees in Latin America. They also lobbied to oppose the new Refugee Law of 1989.

At this time Nancy said, "Now we know that unless we care for our fellow human beings, we who are the minority, will be swept away by desperate starving oppressed people who can no longer tolerate the way in which they are forced to live. Strict refugee laws and barricades will not keep them out when they become too desperate."

As the '90s progressed, Nancy grew less optimistic with the change in provincial government, attitudes towards refugees and towards immigrants in general. Policies became more restrictive. It was harder to bring in refugees from the latest centres of turmoil in the Middle East and Africa. Funding for programs were cut; landing fees grew higher. One of Nancy's last projects was an Art Therapy Program for refugee children who had witnessed violence. By creating art and drama in a patient, healing atmosphere, the children could regain their balance.

"The main thing is to get children to realize they are important to us and then to Canada and they will be able to live creatively in spite of their memories. Our goal is to see them regain their childhood," said Nancy.

Nancy died at the age of 88 with many projects still undone. Eusabio Garcia carries on her work on the Society of Friends refugee committee. He counsels refugees and does settlement work and referrals with a gentle personal touch like Nancy's, and continues to struggle to keep Canada' s doors open. He is critical of the latest Immigration bill in which landed immigrants will be called "National Foreigners" and will have to carry special identification cards. If they lose them, they won't be allowed to re-enter Canada.

Nancy's daughter Judith provides an interesting perspective on her mother. "I'm more political," she says (herself a public school teacher just retired)." My mother was faith-based." I asked Judith how her mother would like to be remembered.

"As an artist, a Quaker and as someone who made a difference," said Judith. "She would talk about what Toronto was like when she was a child and the positive contributions immigrants make to Canada. She would say (to all of us) not to lose hope. One person can make a difference."

So let's stand back for a minute and think about how the legacy of Nancy Pocock's life applies to us. First, as an individual, it shows what faith and commitment can do. When looking through Nancy's voluminous files in the York University archives, I read case after case of terrible suffering that Nancy had carefully annotated, dictated to her by people from all over the world. How could someone so committed to peace listen to those endless stories of violence and not get depressed by it? I think Nancy'' faith carried her through.

Nancy wrote, "Violence comes from a deep sense of frustration of living with cruelty, torture and lack of self-confidence. They (the victims) lack self-esteem and we must help them find it."

At this time (the late '80s and early '90s) there were many organizations working together to help refugees, including the Toronto Refugee Affairs Council (or TRAC, as some of you know).

One of Nancy's last projects was an Art Therapy Program for refugee children who had witnessed violence. By creating art and drama in a patient, healing atmosphere, the children could regain their balance.

We can apply these sentiments on the level of being ESL teachers as well.

We can apply these sentiments on the level of being ESL teachers as well. Nancy devoted her life to many of the things we do as teachers: listening well, being patient, helping with settlement issues and ultimately empowering our students to adapt and function in Canadian society. We may not have the means or opportunity to visit so many other countries as Nancy did. (She was not a full-time teacher after all!) But, we can be inspired by her model and remember that our contributions count.

As Nancy said on the closing lines of her testimony, "By the Grace of God I have become Myself." "We must use the gifts of knowledge and intellect that God has given us, not to gain power and domination, but in creative ways. No matter what our age and situation, we can all join in building a just healing and compassionate society. The way to salvation of humankind on our mother the earth is to rebuild and nurture with love."

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A Tale of Joy

I usually remember so many things that have happened to me in the last ten years but the most important memories that usually come to my mind are when I missed my family and when I came to Canada from Kenya.

First, when I was a little child at the age of eight years old, I was separated from my family my mother, 2 sisters and dad. While I was playing with our neighbour's children, very heavy fighting started that prevented me from getting home. The mother of the children that I was playing with wouldn't let me go out of her house because she couldn't neglect her children and take me to our house, or keep her children and let me go out to my house because bullets were flying in the air like birds. In the end I stayed with the lady and her children. Therefore, I stayed with this family all that day, and the next day was quiet – I mean there wasn't much fighting. Although, we could hear some sounds of the guns, she took me back to our home. The door was open, so we entered without knocking. Unfortunately, the house was so quiet, and nobody was there – even mom and dad weren't there, so I felt sad and lonely. The lady that was with me was so kind to me and she recognized how sad I was so she started to comfort me. Since we didn't see my parents at the house, she took me back to her house where I became a member of her family. Although she couldn't be like my mother, she was trying to be for me whatever I would have wanted from my mom. I stayed with her family for years, and then I finally heard that my mom and dad were in Canada. After I heard that they didn't die, I tried to communicate with them, and at last I found my parents' telephone number and called them and talked to them. Although I had been having sad times, I became normal after I first talked to my mom. My mother used to call me every weekend and tell me how they survived, and then one day as I was talking to mom, she told me some very good news, and that good news was that she said I would be with her in the coming years. The news was the next best thing I ever heard since the day that I saw our house-standing empty. I mean after the day the fighting began. I was always seeing our house with no people in it. To fulfill my mom's wish, I was supposed to go to some other neighbouring country since my country had no ruling government or any embassy, so I started to prepare to travel to Kenya since it was the closest country and had a embassy and government.

Travelling from Somalia to Kenya was too hard at this time because there wasn't any transportation company that worked between Kenya and Somalia. Therefore, it took me a long time to find a truck going to Kenya. Finally, I found one at last. I travelled three days to Kenya. When I reached the border of Kenya, I went into Nairobi since it was the capital of Kenya and had a foreign embassy like the Canadian embassy. After I got to Nairobi, I telephoned my dad, and he sent me money for living. I rented a room at a hotel, and the Canadian High commission sent me a form. After I was staying in Nairobi for about a week I filled the form with the required information and turned it to them. Although Nairobi wasn't anarchy like Mogadishu, it had different problem for people like me who didn't have a valid passport because the Kenyan Aoba used to arrest people on sight regardless of age or sex. Therefore, it was quite hard for me to stay there alone as I was waiting for a response from the embassy. The response from the embassy reached me three months after I gave the form to them. The answer was telling me to have a DNA test because they wanted to confirm I was the son. Arranging this test took a year and half because my dad didn't have enough money to do the test, but after a year and half we had the first, and the embassy gave me the landed document as they recognized that I was the son. When I got the landed document, dad paid the international organization of migration for the airplane from Nairobi. The organization was too kind to me and arranged other needed documents for me. After an 18 hour flight I landed in Toronto on July 13, and my father came to the airport to pick me up. An indescribable emotion was between us since it was the first sight that we had of each other for a long time. When we reached home from the airport, I was surprised to see my sisters because I wasn't used to hearing "brother" being said to me for such a long time. Therefore, I was happy when they said "hi brother". The emotions of our house that day were so high, as it is for people like us that found each other after a presumed death.

Liban Hagi,
Student, Bathurst Heights S.S.

The mother of the children that I was playing with wouldn't let me go out of her house because she couldn't neglect her children and take me to our house, or keep her children and let me go out to my house because bullets were flying in the air like birds.

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Nikolic, Vesna & Cabaj, Hanna. *Am I teaching well? Self-evaluation strategies for effective teachers.* Pippin Publishing, Toronto. 2000. 264 pages.

Am I teaching well? Self-evaluation strategies for effective teachers is a resource book for newly qualified to experienced teachers as well as teacher trainers interested in improving their classroom practices. As the title implies, the book encourages readers to reflect on various aspects of their workplace and teaching situation, then to self-evaluate their own role and attitudes. In all, the book offers 16 chapters, an appendix on using video- or audio taping for self-evaluation, and a reading list.

The authors present self-evaluation as an aid to professional development. They recognise that early in their career, teachers' main focus is on *what* they teach. This focus changes into how they teach *what* they teach and, eventually, *why* they teach the way they do. To this end, the book offers an impressive number of tasks, covering a broad range of topics which encourage readers to reflect on varied aspects of their teaching. It provides a workbook that fits in well with the increased emphasis on more theoretical work, such as reflective practice in teaching, as well as the recent trend towards at least a component of self-evaluation in staff performance evaluations, which has become part of most staff performance evaluation in the workplace.

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The book covers a broad range of topics, relating to organisation of and relationships in the workplace: planning, delivery and evaluation of lessons and programs, and professional development. Each chapter starts with one or two introductory pages on the specific topic and then presents a series of tasks. In the introductory chapter, Nikolic and Cabaj suggest a number of techniques that readers might use for reflection and self-evaluation. Some of these techniques are reflected in the tasks suggested throughout the chapters of the book. The purpose of the tasks is to stimulate individuals' reflective thought processes on the topic, especially in terms of the role the individual plays and his/her attitude in a particular situation. The tasks vary somewhat depending on the topic, but they tend to involve pen and paper activities such as answering questions, making lists, completing charts and occasionally drawing sketches.

Am I teaching well? Self-evaluation strategies for effective teachers is a helpful addition to teacher resources on professional development. Its focus on encouraging and guiding practitioners in their reflections and self-evaluation should help them gain important insights about their teaching as well as their teaching-related interpersonal relationships. Its broad range of topics should be of interest to teachers regardless of their subject, institutional context or student population.

Its focus on encouraging and guiding practitioners in their reflections and self-evaluation should help them gain important insights about their teaching as well as their teaching-related interpersonal relationships.

However, a valuable extension of its offerings might have included some suggestions on how practitioners could proceed once they have completed their reflections and self-evaluations. For example, some ideas as to how to invite and engage in discussion with colleagues to explore different points of view, in the sense of a Vygotskyan social construction of knowledge, would likely be beneficial. Such discussion would provide additional opportunities for professional growth, as well as an opportunity for more varied tasks. Similarly, reference to specific sources to expand knowledge in those areas, or an annotated bibliography, would facilitate the pursuit of further readings, and might be considered in future editions of this book.

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Bullets on the Water: Refugee Stories. Compiled and edited by Ivaylo Grouev. Published for Carleton University by McGill-Queens University Press, 2000.

Unfortunately, for the most part, only few Canadians will read this short but significant book. This is a pity. This book deserves more readership than it will get either within Canada or abroad.

By means of 18 transcribed interviews of refugees accepted into Canada in the last ten years or so, Grouev successfully reminds us of the terrible cruelty and inhumanity that people inflict upon one another, the courage, endurance and resilience with which some people face torture, destruction and humiliation, and the loss of all that they knew and was precious to them – home, family, friends, job, prestige, and culture. We learn how these refugees managed to make their separate ways to Canada, how they were treated and received on arrival and a little about their lives and feelings as they struggled to copy in a strange new land. He also reminds us that Canada is a haven of sanity, decency and warmth where some escapees from injustice, pain and deprivation find peace, albeit for some a troubled one, and the opportunity to rebuild broken lives. Grouev also reminds us that some never recover and many of the rest do so only partially.

This book is short at 155 pages. The introduction too, is short, crisp and to the point. Before each interview, the author provides succinct descriptions of the countries from which his interviewees have escaped (Iran, Bosnia, Somalia, El Salvador, Iraq, etc.). In addition, for each chapter, he provides a synopsis of the political and or military conditions within which the interviewees were entrapped.

The interviews are interesting from a stylistic point of view. One might think they could do with some strong editing and removal of factual errors. However, the errors are deliberate. Grouev explains this in his introduction: "What I wanted was to provide a way to let them present their stories, without forcing their words into a structured literary format ... I have tried to preserve the original rhythm and energy of expression of our interviews."

This reviewer believes that the author succeeded in his task remarkably well, lending an authenticity and reality to the refugees and their experiences.

This is a good and valuable book. Grouev should be thanked for reminding Canadians of just how much they have to be thankful for and that they should be proud of, but not complacent about the small but decent, efforts they make to improve the world as a whole and to help individuals less fortunate than themselves. Equally, he should be thanked for reminding us of the pain and misery in this world and of the need for us to try to prevent it and succour the physically- and psychologically-wounded.

But let it be clear. I take these as the implicit messages of Grouev's book. He does not preach. His approach is one of complete objectivity. He lets the refugees tell their stories and leaves it to the reader to draw his or her own conclusions.

We learn how these refugees managed to make their separate ways to Canada, how they were treated and received on arrival and a little about their lives and feelings as they struggled to copy in a strange new land.

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