

English Language Learning Magazine

CONTACT

Integrating language
and transcending
boundaries

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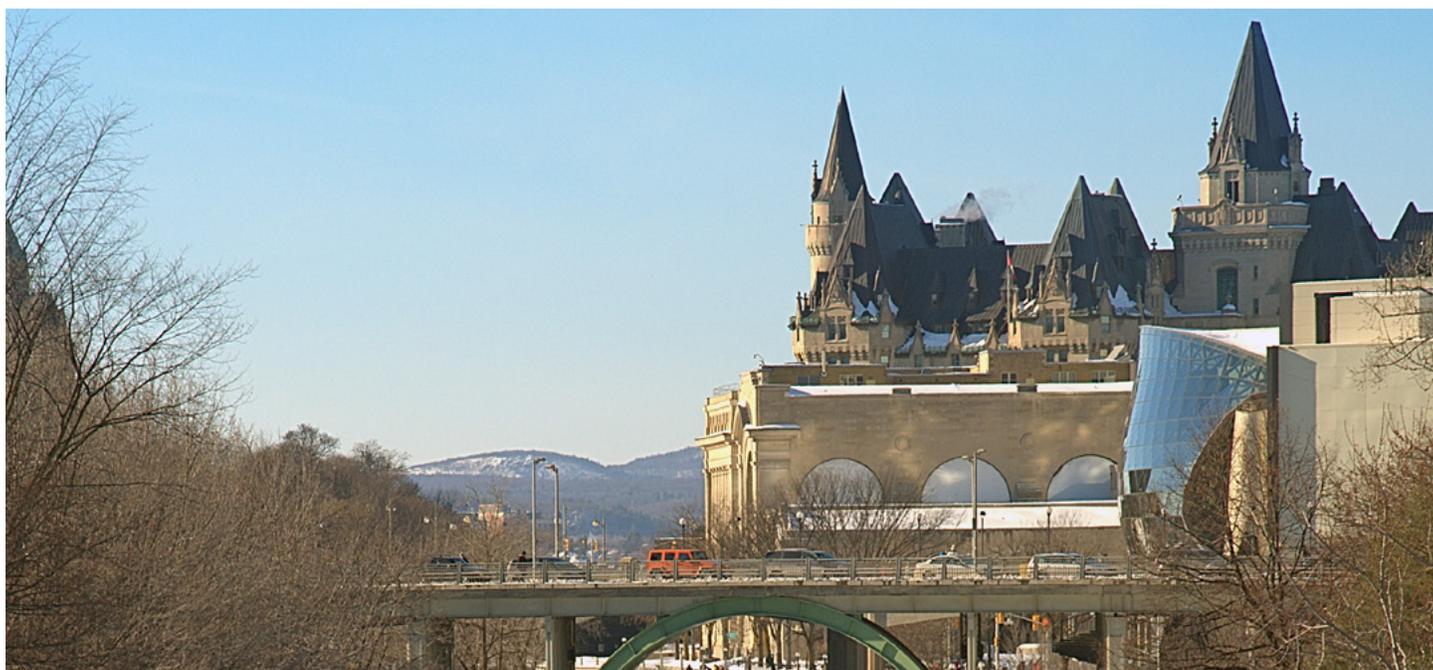
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Calendar

March 1-4	Languages Canada Conference
March 7	TESL Durham Spring Workshop
March 21-24	AAAL Annual Conference
March 25-28	TESOL Conference
March 26-28	World Congress of Modern Languages
May 2	TESL PHE i3 Conference
May 22-23	TOSCON15: TESL Toronto
May 27-29	CALL conference
May30-June 5	Congress of the Humanities

Please, contact us (editor@teslontario.org) to let us know about upcoming events.



EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to another conference issue of *Contact* magazine! As always, the conference provided us with an overwhelming number of presentations.

On a personal note, 2014 was the first time in a decade that I've been unable to attend the conference because I've been studying in Edinburgh since September. Consequently, I've been very pleased to be able to catch up vicariously with some of the sessions I missed. I hope that others who were unable to attend will also benefit from the write-ups presented here. I'd like to thank all the presenters, but especially those who took the time to share their work here with *Contact* readers.

We start with three incredibly practical classroom-focused articles. Sue Boudreau and Rhonda Newhook provide a clear framework and some useful activities, all based around collaborating with local public health offices. Brett Basbaum, Audrey Beaulne, and Jennifer Weiler also give us a helpful set of holiday activities for use with multilevel groups. Bringing these together, Kelly Morrissey and John Sivell share a thoughtful dialogue about getting the most from activities by returning repeatedly to the same language.

Kim Noels shares a write-up of her keynote address, showing the complicated ways that motivation and learning act on each other, and how teachers' motivation also comes into the mix.

Lea Westlake, Madeleine Nerenberg, and Bridget Glassco present an interesting model employed at the KEYS Job Centre, which brings together in one centre various resources for immigrants. Christina Cole introduces the TESL Ontario webinar series, which can be a great way to engage in PD. Pamela Barkwell tells the story about her journey with extensive reading. Marijke Wertheim helps us understand the idea of English as an international language. Brenda Lohrenz and Hanna Cabaj envision what LINC might look like in five years. And Judy Thompson outlines some useful steps for those interested in becoming online language coaches.

Finally, Eufemia Fantetti brings us another installment of Viva La Lingua Franca, her unique take on English teaching.

I'll be back in Canada soon, and hope to see you at the TESOL convention in Toronto March 25–28.

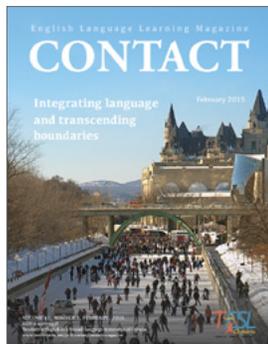


Edinburgh Castle

CONTACT

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Personnel

Editor	Brett Reynolds
EAB members	Hedy McGarrell David Wood Hanna Cabaj
Webmaster	Kevin O'Brien
Design	Yoko Reynolds

Legal

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TESL ONTARIO

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Contact TESL Ontario

TESL Ontario #405 - 27 Carlton St.
Toronto, ON M5B 1L2
Phone: 416-593-4243 or 1-800-327-4827
Fax: 416-593-0164
<http://www.teslontario.net>

Enquiries regarding membership or change of address should be addressed to the TESL Ontario Membership Coordinator at membership@teslontario.org.

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A PRAGMATIC COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO IMPROVING IMMIGRANT HEALTH

By Sue Boudreau & Catherine Hodgins, Ottawa Carleton District School Board
and Rhonda Newhook, Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization

When immigrants arrive in Canada, their health is typically better than that of the average Canadian, but it usually deteriorates over the following four to ten years. Many factors can contribute to this decline; these may include a language barrier, the process of immigration itself, financial concerns, employment issues, the lack of a social support network, and adopting unhealthy behaviours of the new country. In 2007, Ottawa Public Health (OPH) and the Ottawa Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) formed a partnership to help address some of the health conditions immigrants face, such as diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and mental health problems. OPH nurses and presenters began to come into our LINC and ESL classes to provide health information during English instruction time. This was the beginning of consistent health messages being brought directly to immigrants.

In 2013, OPH conducted a study in various key Ottawa neighbourhoods using surveys, health records, phone calls, and visits. From this study, they could see the need for education to reduce barriers, increase access to health services and information, close gaps in health inequities and increase health literacy. Best practices indicate that collaboration and partnerships are among the more effective elements in making a positive difference, in helping overcome some of the issues, and in improving delivery of information. OPH brought these HEAL (Healthy Eating Active Living) messages to communities to try to impact lifestyle changes.

The objective of this current project is to address these health problems and ensure that public health topics are covered during English language classes by providing consistent and accurate health information to newcomers. The three of us became involved in this project, which is now called “Language Learning for Health”, because we were interested in health issues and materials development. We had been noticing such helpful material in OPH presentations at our sites that we wanted to build on these messages and make them more accessible to our learners. We had found that learners often went into a presentation “cold” (i.e., with no preparation) or that they attended a presentation but there was no follow-up to reinforce what had been presented, and consequently the learners did not benefit from the presentations as much as they should have. We felt that it would be more useful for our learners to have lessons that were more well-rounded and interactive, and that hands-on learning would help them to retain more information.

To this end, the Ottawa Carleton District School Board collaborated with Ottawa Public Health to develop the first series of twenty-four lesson plans on eight different topics related to food and living a healthier lifestyle. The three of us met first with OPH, and then as a group of developers, to share ideas, confirm levels, and collaborate to achieve minimal overlap among topics. We used existing OPH PowerPoint presentations as a guideline so that the information and message in our materials would be consistent with theirs. Materials were edited for content by subject matter experts, such as nurses and dietitians, and for appropriate benchmark level by Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) experts. Field testing was conducted in a variety of classes at different benchmark levels and locations in Ottawa, and final editing was completed in August 2014. The eight topics developed were Everybody's Food Budget, Let's Go Shopping for Food, Diabetes Prevention, Sugar Sweetened Beverages, Canada's Food Guide, Reading Food Labels, Reducing Salt Consumption, and Calcium & Vitamin D. Each topic includes three lesson plans, each at a different English proficiency level based on the CLBs. The three CLB levels in each lesson plan topic are ESL Literacy-CLB 1, CLB 2–3, and CLB 4–5. Since the conference, three additional sets of lesson plans have been developed at three levels: Dental Health, Physical Activity, and Mental Health. More topics are scheduled for development in 2015.

Each lesson plan has been designed following the same template and includes Instructor Notes, a variety of activities, separate assessments for each CLB level, and a self-reflection task.

- The **Instructor Notes** at the beginning of the lesson plan include a Core Contents statement, Learning Objectives, Materials Needed for the activities, a Word Bank for each activity, guidelines and suggestions on how to use the Activities, and Answer Keys.
- **Prior Knowledge** introduces the unit. It is essential that the instructor elicit learners' prior knowledge on the topic so the activities can build on what learners already know. It makes learning more meaningful and relevant and helps the learner to "connect" with the topic.
- The **Warm-Up** activity builds on the questions asked in the **Prior Knowledge** section.
- Each activity in the **Activities** section has been designed to focus on a certain skill (reading, writing, listening and/or speaking) and competency (e.g. Comprehending Information, Sharing Information, Reproducing Information, Getting Things Done). The activities are ready-to-use, which minimizes the time instructors need to spend preparing. Most activity worksheets simply need to be photocopied. Some of the worksheets (e.g. cards and game boards) could be printed in colour, and laminated for reuse. The activities are interactive and encourage learning through participation and dialogue. They begin with a controlled activity and, especially at the higher levels, end with a free activity such as a presentation or writing culminating task upon which the assessment is based. As mentioned in the **Instructor Notes** of each lesson plan, the instructor can select activities at any of the CLB levels within a topic to suit the language levels and individual needs of the students in the classroom.

- The **Assessment** tasks have been designed as a way to evaluate the learners on what they have learned during the unit. The assessments are based on the CLB levels and specify the skill and the competency; a rubric or marking guideline is provided for each assessment. There is a separate assessment for each level; for example a lesson plan for CLB 2–3 will have one assessment for CLB 2 and one for CLB 3. These assessments may be used as Portfolio Based Language Assessment (PBLA) tasks to track learning and help determine learners' CLB level.
- The **Learner Self-Reflection** helps the learner review the material covered in the lesson while capturing his or her intention to adopt a desirable healthy practice as a result of the knowledge acquired.

These lesson plans are intended for anyone who teaches English as a Second Language, and who would like to incorporate important public health content into their language teaching. The lesson plans were originally developed to be used in coordination with public health staff, where an instructor would introduce a public health topic by covering basic concepts and vocabulary, while leaving the more complex areas of the topic to a public health staff member who delivers health sessions in the classroom. However, if there are no public health agencies in the community, instructors can use the lessons on their own as a tool for language teaching. To facilitate this, we provide websites, pamphlets and additional sources of information in a **Resources** section at the end of the **Instructor Notes**.

We feel very fortunate to be able to work on this project to help newcomers receive current and important health information. As this project continues and the lessons are introduced into more and more classrooms, it is our hope that immigrants will see an improvement in their health.

The lesson plans are now available online at <https://tutela.ca> and <http://olip-plio.ca/knowledge-base/toolkit/>

Author Bios

Sue Boudreau has been working in the ESL and curriculum development fields for 33 years, the last 23 with the OCDSB as an ESL and LINC instructor, Portfolio Based Language Assessment (PBLA) Lead, Support Instructor and as a curriculum developer on this project.

Catherine Hodgins has worked for the OCDSB for 24 years as both an ESL and LINC Instructor, PBLA Lead and as a curriculum developer on this project.

Rhonda Newhook has been teaching ESL/LINC in the Ottawa community for ten years with both the OCDSB and OCISO and worked as a curriculum developer on this project.

MULTILEVEL GROUP ACTIVITIES FOR HOLIDAYS AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS

By Brett Basbaum, Hamilton Public Library,

Audrey Beaulne and Jennifer Weiler, Immigrant Women's Centre, Hamilton

Our story takes place at the Hamilton North location of the Immigrant Women's Centre (IWC). This site is located in the Beasley neighbourhood, one of Hamilton's poorest areas. IWC provides settlement services and Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) classes. The majority of the LINC students at this site are refugees, many with no, little, or interrupted formal education. Most of the students are younger women with children, whose goals are to integrate into Canadian society and to perform the daily tasks required to take care of themselves and their families. Classes range from Literacy to Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) 4.

As we write this, a holiday long weekend is right around the corner. Teachers and students alike are tired and ready for a break from routine. As teaching Canadian holidays is part of the LINC curriculum and mandate, the instructors decide to combine classes for a day of themed multilevel group activities. The challenge is to devise activities that will engage students at all the levels, while ensuring that they are all working on skills related to their benchmarks.

Fatima and Kedijah are students in the Literacy class. Their improvements in reading and writing come very slowly due to their minimal education back home. Fatima and Kedijah's speaking, on the other hand, is quite good and they are often the first to understand the teacher's directions. In fact, they often help to explain tasks to their classmates.

One activity planned for the multilevel group holiday session is "Guess How Many Candies are in the Jar." A simple and common game, it consists only of a jar of holiday candies and a chart with columns for name and guess. Participants write their name and a unique-number guess at how many candies the jar contains (unique guesses ensure that there is only one winner).

Fatima and Kedijah are surprised and somewhat reluctant when their teacher details the candies game and suggests that they lead it, explaining it to the students in all the other classes. It takes some convincing, but the women agree and do an excellent job. They carry the jar and a list on flip chart paper from table to table and tell the others what to do. They use their skills of giving instructions in English, while the others follow the directions. Students practise writing their names, reading a chart, estimating amounts, and scanning to ensure that they are choosing a unique number. Once everyone has participated, a teacher announces the actual number and everyone scans the list in search of the winner.

The second activity of the group day is “Card Matching Mingle.” Each student is handed a puzzle piece cut from a greeting card for the holiday being celebrated. The teachers have divided the pieces so that they each have parts from every card and hand them out to their own students, thus ensuring that final groups are a mixture of students from all the levels. Students mingle around the room to find others with pieces of the same picture. Once in their groups, students complete the puzzle and then turn it over to reveal questions or instructions. Today the cards read...

1. Say your name.
2. Say two things about your family.
3. Say three things you will do on the holidays.
4. Say four ways to practise or study English on the holidays.

In their groups, students take turns introducing themselves and sharing some information. Zahra is in the CLB 1/2 class. She is a high level 2 student and her teacher feels she is ready for the challenge of the next class. Zahra is used to her teacher and is comfortable with her classmates and is reluctant to move on.

In Zahra’s group, a higher-level student helps her to read the instructions. The teachers mingle during the activity to check on each group and also share some information and ideas. The card-mingle activity leaves Zahra feeling a bit more confident, having met and worked with other students and instructors.

Seema and Hafa are in the CLB 3/4 class. Many of the students in this class leave early to pick up their children from school, and Seema and Hafa, along with just a few other classmates are often together for the last half an hour or so of class time. At the end of class one day they help prepare for the “Flower Power” activity. They cut out large petals from construction paper and circles for the flower centres. On each centre they carefully print the writing prompt, “What can you do in English?”

On the day of the multilevel group activity, the teachers explain the task. Each student has a petal and should write something they can do in English. The higher level students assist the others, perhaps writing, “I can write my name” on a scrap piece of paper for a Literacy student to copy onto her petal or helping a CLB 2 student to spell a word. When the petals are complete, the flowers are posted to create a beautiful display and the students take turns presenting what they have written.

The day is a huge success. The students have such a fun time that they hardly notice that they are learning. Each activity engages the learners while they practise skills aligned to their benchmarks.

The instructors decide to celebrate the next holiday with another multilevel group activity day. They gradually develop a list of activities, some holiday specific (e.g. carving jack-o-lanterns), but most adaptable (e.g. the “Flower Power” premise is put to use on

Thanksgiving where students write expressions of gratitude on leaves of a tree). They mark less known holidays such as Earth Day, which is celebrated with a vocabulary and sorting activity about garbage and recycling, and an Emily Carr lesson with a short video about her landscape painting. Students then have a chance to create their own Carr-inspired tree paintings for which they write English titles on gallery-style name plates.

The days are so successful and such a great break from routine, that the instructors have even been known to invent a holiday or two. In the bleak days at the end of January, the students celebrate “Summer Fun in the Winter Day” which involves students dressing up in bright colours and doing a number of summer themed language activities. The day ends with all students enjoying a “Community Fruit Salad.” Each student contributes one piece of fruit and practises vocabulary and following instructions while they wash, chop, and mix the treat.

You might think that this is where our story ends, but what happens next is perhaps the best part of all. The instructors realize that they are sitting on something that is too good not to share. They prepare a TESL Ontario presentation, not only creating a long, detailed list of activities, but also a chart matching activities and benchmark skills for students from Literacy to CLB 4. They hope you’ll check them out on the TESL Ontario Conference file [management site](#) (Username is *TESLHandout* and the Password is *handout*. Choose Thursday, and session code TBK).

Author Bio



Jennifer Weiler is a TESL Ontario accredited language instructor and methodology instructor. She started teaching adult ESL in 2003 and has taught from Foundation to Phase II literacy and LINC 1-5. Currently she is working on her Master of Education degree in the area of teaching reading to ESL adult literacy learners. She was a contributing writer in the revisions of the CLB 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners. She is also the president of the TESL Hamilton-Wentworth Affiliate Chapter.

Author Bio



Audrey Beaulne is a LINC instructor in Hamilton where she currently teaches CLB 1-3. She has been teaching since 2004, and has taught Literacy through CLB 5. She is also the Communications Committee Director for the TESL Hamilton-Wentworth Affiliate Chapter.

Author Bio



Brett Basbaum is a LINC instructor who has taught levels ranging from Literacy to CLB 5. She has also taught international high school and university students in the McMaster Summer ESL Program. Brett serves on the executive committee of the TESL Hamilton Affiliate Chapter.

A YEAR OF SLOW

One Teacher's Implementation of 'Back to the Well'

By Kelly Morrissey, YMCA of Windsor & Essex County
and John Sivell, Brock University

At the 2014 TESL Ontario Conference we gave a joint presentation on this topic, which we prepared through a series of email, Skype, and face-to-face discussions over the previous few months. Thus, when thinking about how to organize this report, we decided that reflecting that same kind of dialogue would be the right approach.

John: I must say that I was surprised when you contacted Chirawibha and me to follow up on our presentation about "Sending them back to the well." What made you do that?

Kelly: I was about to begin using the ideas in one of my classes and had some questions for you.

John: And what made you start using the ideas in your class?

Kelly: That original presentation was in 2011, and somehow I couldn't stop thinking about it. I was especially intrigued by Chirawibha's classroom results of increased engagement and improved attendance. Like everyone, I was always looking for ways to have that happen in my own classes. Then, something quite remarkable happened. I remember it so vividly. It was a November morning in 2013 when Huarong, a student in my multi-level seniors' class, raised his hand from the back row and politely asked, "Could we have less biting off and more...."

John: Digesting?

Kelly: Exactly. He was pantomiming just that. Chewing, digesting. I got it.

John: So, that was the connection?

Kelly: Yes. I was thrilled that this group was finally responding to my many invitations to them to help me shape the curriculum. I guess they finally believed me. And when I thought about that question, I realized that this was an explicit request for the "Back to the Well" approach that had been in the back of my mind all along. I still had my notes from your presentation and then I remembered that the two of you had subsequently published a paper in the August 2012 issue of *Contact*. So, I re-read it.

John: That sounds great! Did it actually help?

Kelly: You have no idea. I printed it out and soon had highlights and adhesive markers all over it. I especially appreciate the half of the article that included suggestions for classroom application, which you divided into vocabulary, syntax and discourse activities.

John: So you brought some of those ideas back to the classroom?

Kelly: Yes. I'm a believer in partnering with students in planning the curriculum. So I told them all about the general back-to-the-well principles and proposed a one-month trial. They were in complete agreement.

John: It's interesting that you took them into your confidence that way, rather than just trying out a few new activities without explaining any of the background reasoning. Can you remember what you told them?

Kelly: Yes, I can. As I said, these were adult students, and they had the maturity and experience to be interested something a bit theoretical. So, I told them about having attended the workshop and briefly summarized the principles as well as a few of the proposed activities. That really helped me get them onside.

John: Yes, it sounds like that was a wise move. And then, what did your implementation of the ideas look like in practice?

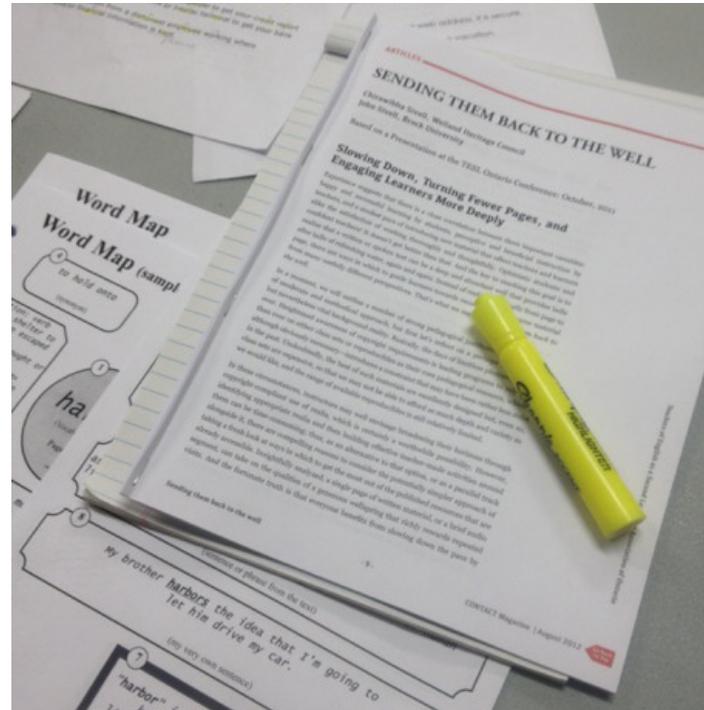
Kelly: Well, the first thing we did was start using an easel chart to record the week's word bank. I had heard in another conference workshop that in order to cement new vocabulary in long-term memory, you should revisit the terms after one hour, one day, one week and one month. Having the flip chart at the front of the class allowed us to easily return to the new lexis in this way, which seemed to be entirely in keeping with back-to-the-well. It turned out that the students just adored this.

John: And where did you get the words from?

Kelly: I also made another change: I started using just one oral or written text per week, introduced on Monday. That weekly text was the source of the words. Also, we began sampling almost all the proposed activities in your *Contact* paper to see which ones we liked most and wanted to use again and again.

John: And which ones have proved most useful?

Kelly: This probably depends on the group, but my students really like semantic maps. Huarong told me one morning as he showed me his completed word map, "I will



never forget this word as long as I live.” He was very pleased. They also really enjoy it when I warm them up by putting a sentence from the text on the board. First I have them recite it in turn as I erase first one word then another until everyone has the sentence memorized. Then I call on students to change it in various ways: from third person to first, from present tense to simple past, from positive to negative, singular to plural. This particular group has strong reading and writing skills but are weaker in listening and speaking, so this exercise nudges them outside their comfort zone in a way that benefits them but it does not make them too nervous because the text has become so familiar.

John: Are there any other favourites?

Kelly: Oh, many more. I can’t list them all here, but in any case it will vary from class to class. I think an instructor thinking about trying this would be wise just to try everything listed in the article; each group will gravitate toward the specific handful of activities that benefits them the most.

John: Is that multilevel seniors class the only one in which you have tried the concepts?

Kelly: No, it isn’t. In early 2014, I had a chance to teach a LINC level-two class for a three-month term. And this was where I really got to witness the “remarkable transformation” that your paper claims can take place in a classroom with a more thoughtful, thorough pace of learning.

John: I’d love to hear about that.

Kelly: Well, most of them had just come from LINC one. It was up to me to give them the first of the meta-language they were going to need as they ascended through the LINC levels: *noun*, *verb*, *adjective*, and eventually *adverb*.

John: Right.

Kelly: So after reading the new oral/written text—typically something from the LINC Two Classroom Activities binder—and exhausting any activities that came with that text, we would often do a collection activity whereby we used a graphic organizer to find all of those three or four main parts of speech.

John: So they took to that rather well?

Kelly: They struggled at first, of course. But because we returned to the same grammatical categories week after week, based on various texts, they really started to get the



hang of it. And that's where I saw their confidence start to bloom. I witnessed the excitement that comes from proficiency, from mastery of a skill. When you know what you're doing, what you're doing becomes fun. That's what they showed me.

John: So, would you say that such increased confidence is the most important outcome?

Kelly: Yes, in a general way, although I can group the changes I've observed in my classroom into three related categories.

John: And those are?

Kelly: First of all, the atmosphere became more relaxed. Student confidence seemed to go way up, and engagement increased, as well.

John: That's a nice result. What's the second thing you noted?

Kelly: The back-to-the-well classroom strikes me as more egalitarian, more inclusive.

John: How do you mean?

Kelly: John, we all know that every class is multilevel in some respect. I mean you're always going to have the one or two keeners up front, and you're always going to have a few students who just need more time to process new material.

John: So true! And would you say that improved confidence seems to accommodate those differences?

Kelly: Yes, there's something for both groups. My keen students are happier because I'm taking them into the language in more depth. We're exploring clauses or asking ourselves whether a given synonym can or cannot be substituted for the original. It's fun for them. Meanwhile, the students who are slower to process new information are happy because it's Wednesday and they're still having a chance to get more and more comfortable with a text they first saw on Monday.

John: That's interesting. And what is the third change you've observed?

Kelly: The third big shift I've noticed is that my classroom has become less teacher-centric over time. As students have become really familiar with our tried and true ways of exploring a text, they have begun to have enough confidence to take the reins and tell me what they want to do next.

John: Sounds almost too good to be true.

Kelly: Well, of course I always have to be watchful for the best opportunities to keep things going well, but on the whole it really does work!

John: I'm really pleased to know that, Kelly. But, to be fair, I should also ask if making those innovations has been difficult or time-consuming.

Kelly: No, quite the contrary. My prep has become easier and quicker in the long run. But I must admit that it wasn't easy overcoming my initial apprehensions. I couldn't imagine that such a snail's pace would not result in boredom.

John: But it hasn't?

Kelly: Never for a second. Still, I have a colleague who won't try this because she can't overcome that fear. I guess we have to recognize that it's counter-intuitive until you try it and see what happens in the class. It requires a leap of faith up front, I think.

John: That sounds reasonable. So, if for any instructors who do want to take that leap of faith and try out some of the ideas in the classroom, where should they go first?

Kelly: They can download/print your article [using this URL](#), and they can print out the "Toolbox" and set of nine graphic organizers that you and I developed for our TESL Ontario workshop this past fall by visiting <http://www.kellymorrissey.com/blank-templates.html>, where they'll find nine templates in MS Word that they are free to use as-is or to modify.

John: Okay, that seems like a good foundation, but are there also ways for them to branch out on their own?

Kelly: Yes, if they're keen on finding practical ways to create additional materials that tap into the back-to-the-well concept by lingering usefully on the same core text, they will also see links to six great online tools, all free, that allow teachers to generate other types of worksheets and activities from their own text. Suddenly, one text can become the basis for an extremely diverse set of exercises that simultaneously promote confidence while deepening understanding.

John: That sounds like good advice. It makes sense to begin with steps that promise practical results that can be achieved reasonably quickly.

Kelly: Yes, of course, but I think that there's another aspect that could be important, too. Just as my LINC students appreciated knowing *why* I was suggesting those new activities, instructors may also feel most comfortable if they can connect back-to-the-well recommendations with tried-and-true explanations from learning psychology. Do the suggestions that you and Chirawibha proposed have such a basis?

John: Absolutely! In fact, I believe the roots go back in educational psychology for at least 50 or 60 years. To me, there's a pretty clear pattern that points in the direction of what you described above: achieving deep, confident, and lasting mastery of the language by allowing students to encounter new material at a pace that does not overload them.

Kelly: But aren't the newest theories the best? Why include connections from so far back?

John: Yes, I see your point. But it can be useful to reflect on how got to where we are today. At each step along the way, it seems that succeeding theories have *kept* certain enduring insights at the same time as replacing others that did not stand the test of time. So, there's a heritage that grew over time.

Kelly: Okay, could you give a few examples?

John: Yes, indeed. And to keep things simple, there are probably just three really big ideas to bear in mind.

Kelly: And what are those?

John: I think they'd have to be (a) automaticity through pattern practice, (b) schema theory, and (c) connectionism.

Kelly: I'm surprised. Isn't pattern practice just an old fossil from the days of behaviourism?

John: It's old all right, but pattern practice did give rise to at least one long-lasting insight. Even if behaviourism itself cannot provide the answer, we nevertheless realize that language learners must *somehow* reduce the cognitive burden of recognizing and producing common sentence structures in such a way as to focus on creating communicatively effective messages. Figuring out how that happens has become a key criterion for all subsequent theories of language learning, and researchers have argued (e.g. [Morley et al., 1984](#)) that the demise of behaviourism does not diminish the importance of this basic challenge.

Kelly: I see. So, perhaps we can recognize revisiting the same text again and again as a modern version of pattern practice without the old reliance on behaviourism. But you also mentioned schema theory. Isn't that the right explanation for what happens when language students develop subconscious control over language structures?

John: Yes, I agree that there could be a big improvement there. What exactly do you have in mind?

Kelly: Well, every TESL instructor has studied schema theory's model of how background knowledge is organized. To me, it seems like a good idea to drop behaviourism's vision of learning as the accumulation of innumerable separate habits, and replace it with the concept of schemata as the centre of the learning process.

John: So, how would that deal with the cognitive burden problem?

Kelly: Because schemata are memory structures that can assemble many separate bits of information into a single configuration, that model could help explain how students quickly and easily recall what they need.

John: Yes, that's surely a much more convincing model of learning and remembering. And although schema theory is a few decades old now, it still continues to receive support (e.g. [Wiseman, 2008](#)).

Kelly: So, that sounds pretty good, and I see what you mean about each theory building on a former one. From pattern practice we get the idea of needing a way to explain how language learners can manage their cognitive burden, so as to focus attention on their actual message, and the background-knowledge aspect of schema theory seems to provide a way to cover that. All the same, there's still one thing that worries me a bit.

John: Me, too, actually. But you go first.

Kelly: Well, when I watch my students, I see them doing more than just expanding their schemata to be bigger and more numerous. That does quite often happen, but sometimes they also seem to go back and creatively re-arrange parts of their existing long-term memory structures rather than just adding to them. I mean, their schemata don't simply get *bigger*; they also sometimes get *better*.

John: Yes, that's exactly the problem. Schema theory did a lot, but it had its limits. And what you noticed is one of the key issues: it can't readily explain how existing schemata get reorganized. But as you said, by observing our students we can see that some of the most important learning may require not just more extensive schemata, but subtler and better-informed structures for existing memories. For that, we need connectionism, which highlights a far more flexible model.

Kelly: That sounds very important, but how's it supposed to work?

John: Connectionism (e.g. [Li & Zhao, 2013](#)) relates to findings about brain physiology. It argues that long-term memory relies on the dynamic way in which our brains create multiple links among neurons, so as to build parallel and interrelated patterns of information. In that light, long-term memory or background knowledge still matters, but most psychologists have stopped thinking of it in terms of static, linear schemata.

Kelly: So, is the old concept of rather simple, tree-like structures for schemata outdated now? I thought that was a pretty good model.

John: Well, just like pattern practice, schema theory did bring us something useful. Nobody is saying that background knowledge suddenly doesn't matter anymore. But the model has become subtler, so that it can explain experience better.

Kelly: Because it is more flexible.

John: Yes, quite so, and sometimes this newer perspective is called emergentism, which very clearly underlines the improvement over the original claims of schema theory: the focus is now on what researchers call “process rather than structure” (e.g. [Hollich, et al, 2000](#), p. 13). That’s how connectionism can account for the cyclical and creative process of real-life language learning as you described it among your students.

Kelly: That does match what I saw, and maybe it suggests why they weren’t bored or frustrated by revisiting texts that they had seen before. In fact, they were enthusiastic. They really liked getting chances to tackle the same passages in new ways, so as to enrich their understanding.

John: Exactly! In fact, the theorists now talk specifically about “downward causation”, which basically refers to the way in which the newest additions to an evolving pattern of knowledge can have an effect on earlier parts, too (e.g. [Hollich, et al, 2000](#), p. 12).

Kelly: So, that really does capture what I observed: my students were revising and improving what they already knew. That’s probably what Huarong meant by “less biting off and more digesting.”

John: Yes, it does seem to fit. Additionally, it meshes nicely with another very practical, pedagogical insight: the idea of what [van Lier \(2000\)](#) calls the multiple *affordances* of the learner’s world.

Kelly: That’s odd! Isn’t that a term from ecology?

John: Yes, normally it is, but in terms of the back-to-the-well routines that we have been discussing, it usefully reminds us that, in “an environment full of learning opportunities,” the very richness of the opportunities means that teachers should “structure the learner’s activities and participation so that access is available and engagement encouraged” (pp. 252–253).

Kelly: In other words, especially when thinking about materials, we’d want to let our students revisit the same passage multiple times until they felt they had explored all of its possibilities.

John: Just so. And if emergentism is right, those repeated visits might well not simply increase their understanding in an additive way. It could also promote a far more flexible and creative process, with later encounters giving rise to valuable alterations in things that seemed to have been mastered earlier.

Kelly: Yes, the more I look at it, more real-classroom connections seem to appear.

John: Well, if so, perhaps this might provide that last little bit of encouragement for others to take the plunge and give back-to-the-well a try.

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Author Bio



John Sivell is a TESL educator at Brock University, with teaching and training experience in Canada and abroad.

Author Bio



Kelly Morrissey is a LINC Instructor with a passion for excellence. She has experience teaching pronunciation, LINC literacy, LINC 2, and a multi-level class for seniors.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS' SELF-DETERMINED MOTIVATION TO LEARN LANGUAGES

By Kimberly A. Noels, University of Alberta

Abstract

There are many reasons, some of which are better than others for sustaining motivation over the long run. Research evidence suggests that a personally relevant, self-engaged, and inherently interested orientation to language study supports engagement in the learning process, and thereby a variety of positive learning outcomes. Moreover, feelings of pressure, whether from others or self-imposed, can undermine motivation. Teachers can effectively foster students' self-determined motivation by supporting their sense of autonomy, competence, and connectedness with other people. Drawing from recent conceptualizations of language learning motivation as a complex, dynamic system, I point out how reasons, engagement, and feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness reciprocally influence each other across the duration of the language course. Likewise, I discuss how students' motivational orientation and engagement and teachers' motivational orientation and engagement mutually interact in a transactional relationship.

For many decades, teachers and researchers have observed that motivated students tend to experience more successful outcomes in a language course than less motivated students. Although most would agree that motivation is important, pinning down what we mean by “motivation” is a tricky business, because it means many things to many people. According to Gardner (2006, p. 2), the motivated individual is “goal directed, expends effort, is persistent, is attentive, has desires (wants), exhibits positive affect, is aroused, has expectancies, demonstrates self-confidence (self-efficacy), and has reasons...” for learning a language. Two aspects of Gardner's depiction are the focus of the work to be discussed herein. The first is the notion of effort, persistence and attention, which Gardner called “motivational intensity”. This aspect reflects a person's cognitive and behavioural engagement in the learning process, and has been demonstrated by Gardner and his colleagues to be the most consistent predictor of proficiency in the language (see Gardner, 2010, for review). To the extent that language proficiency is a primary goal of language courses, this facet of motivation would be important to understand. The second aspect is the learners' reasons for acquiring a language, which are important because they give meaning to the learning process, affecting the quality of the experience. As well, some

reasons are more likely than others to sustain engagement in the learning process.

I argue that students' reasons influence their engagement because they reflect students' experience of self-determination in the language learning process. Drawing from Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2002) Self-Determination Theory, the more students feel they are engaging in the language learning because they want to (vs. feel they have to), the more they will expend effort, persist, and invest in the learning process, and the more likely they will be to experience positive consequences, such as strong grades, greater proficiency, and willingness to communicate in the target language. If teachers and other significant people in the learners' social world support learners' feelings of autonomy, as well as their feelings of competence and connectedness to others, we can foster a stronger self-determined orientation in their students. In turn, self-determined, engaged students can foster self-determined motivation in language instructors. To make this argument, I will outline a framework for categorizing reasons for language learning, describe research indicating that a self-determined orientation fosters student engagement, show that teachers have a role to play in supporting students' self-determination, and show that student engagement reciprocally influences teachers' motivation.

Orientations for Learning Languages: The Self-Determination Continuum

People report many, many reasons for learning another language—the Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies in the UK lists at least 700 (www.llas.ac.uk/700reasons). It is, of course, impossible to investigate so many diverse reasons for language learning, and so it is expedient to categorize them in some way. Rather than categorizing them thematically (e.g., travel, knowledge, job, friendship), we use a theoretical model that categorizes reasons in terms of their functional significance for motivation. Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002) posits that we are more likely to deeply engage in an activity in a creative and fulfilling manner when it fulfills our innate psychological need to be autonomous agents in our own lives, and also our needs to competently pursue our interests while feeling supported in these pursuits by significant others around us. Our reasons for engaging in an activity can reflect the extent to which we feel that engagement in the activity fulfills these needs, particularly the need for autonomy. Figure 1 outlines a continuum of orientations organized by the degree to which they are regulated by the self (i.e., are autonomous) or by circumstances/persons external to the person (i.e., are controlled). At one extreme (at the top of the figure) is intrinsic motivation, when one engages in an activity because it is inherently satisfying because it fulfills these psychological needs. Intrinsically motivated learners experience a sense of flourishing during the process of mastering complex materials and developing their competencies. At the other extreme (at the bottom of the figure) is amotivation, which describes people who see absolutely no point in learning another language. Generally, these “amotivated” people would not register in a language course, but if they do, perhaps because of institutional requirements,

they would likely quit actively studying the language as soon as they possibly could (and perhaps even resist learning the language altogether; cf. Norton, 2013).



Orientation	Example
Intrinsic Motivation	<p>“I was hooked on German from the beginning. I learned how to count to 10 + that was all it took. I did about 1 month of browsing through some old text books, learned what the nom, acc, dat and genitive definite articles were and then started 101 (which was intensely satisfying). I feel good and excited by it.”</p> <p>-English Canadian learner of German</p>
Integrated Regulation	<p>“I am learning Chinese because my Chinese background is very important to me. Despite being very “North-American-ized” or “white-washed”, I think it is so important that I don’t lose this part of myself which is so fundamental and easy to lose as well... I suppose my reason, then, is because <u>I want to.</u>”</p> <p>-Chinese Canadian heritage language learner</p>
Identified Regulation	<p>“Having worked as a graphic designer for 8 years, I’d like to try and find work in Germany in this field and having the language skills is a major benefit.”</p> <p>- English Canadian learners of German</p>
Introjected Regulation	<p>“I want to speak English like a native speaker so that people back in Korea will recognize me and remember me as a person who speaks English really well.”</p> <p>-Korean learner of English</p>
External Regulation	<p>“Get a job, General education requirements, Mom wants me to.”</p> <p>-English American learner of Spanish</p>
Amotivation	<p>“The school is making me. I don’t know why. I’m a Bio major and I want to be an astronaut. This isn’t fair. I didn’t like Spanish in high school and I don’t like it now. If I wanted to learn another language, I would do it without tests, quizzes, and “language labs”. With every fiber of my being, I wish I didn’t have to take this class.”</p> <p>-Bio Major learner of Spanish</p>

Figure 1. Self-Determination Continuum of Motivational Orientations

Between these two extremes, lies a set of reasons that can be described as extrinsically motivating, in the sense that the reason for engagement does not come from enjoyment of the activity per se. These reasons vary in the extent to which they arise from the learner’s personal goals and values (i.e., autonomous), or are governed by contingencies that are external to the learner (i.e., controlled). A prototypical example of extrinsic motivation is external regulation, in which a person engages in language learning because of a clear contingency set up by circumstances or a specific person, such as educational or occupational promotion or a reward or punishment that will be delivered by a teacher or a parent. Another modestly internalized set of reasons is introjected regulation, which likewise emphasizes pressures or privileges, but these are meted out by the individual learner. For instance, a learner might feel an obligation to learn the language in order to avoid feelings of guilt or shame for not doing so or to garner a sense of prestige and recognition for being so clever. A more internalized orientation is identified regulation, whereby learners have identified

the activity as a means to achieve some important end. For instance, knowing a language might facilitate the pursuit of a career that a person enjoys and values. This reason does not reflect an external or internal pressure (such as a secure salary or an obligation), but rather it is self-determined, in the sense that the learner has chosen to learn the language because it will help to achieve a goal that is personally important. A final set of orientations is integrated regulation, whereby the language is completely integrated with the person's other goals and values, such that using the language would be an expression of the person's sense of self.

This taxonomy is useful for organizing a variety reasons for language learning. It is important to note that learners can hold more than one reason for learning a language. For instance, this Chinese-Canadian learner indicates multiple reasons for learning, which could be categorized as external, introjected, and identified regulation, as well as intrinsic motivation.

I am learning Chinese in order to prove to myself and my family that I am capable of speaking, writing and reading Chinese, Also, I believe that having Chinese as a second language can lead to better job opportunities. If I go to China, or Hong Kong (which I have plans to go there in a few years) it will be very helpful to be able to communicate with other Chinese people. Lastly, in general, I find learning languages to be fun and interesting. (Chinese-Canadian heritage language learner; cited in Comanaru & Noels, 2009, p. 149)

Moreover, learners in different contexts may typically endorse certain kinds of orientations. In a study of ESL, heritage language, and modern language students (Noels et al, 2015), we found that students in each group endorsed reasons that could be categorized across the self-determination continuum or with reference to Gardner's (2010) integrative orientation, which refers to reasons for learning a language pertaining to a desire to interact with members of the target ethnolinguistic group (see Figure 2). Relative to the other groups, however, ESL students were more likely to emphasize that they needed to learn the language because of educational requirements or pressure from parents (i.e., external regulation); heritage learners were more likely to emphasize that the language was important to their sense of self (i.e., integrated regulation); and although modern-language students had reasons that were more evenly distributed across the categories, they expressed more reasons that were categorized as intrinsic motivation.

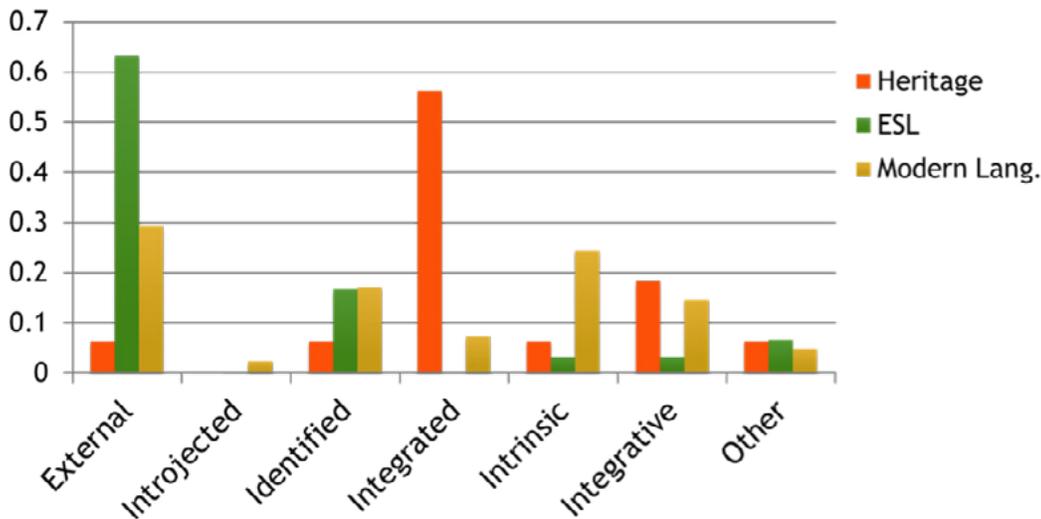


Figure 2. Orientations identified in various groups of second language learners (adapted from Noels et al., 2015).

Implications of a Self-Determined Orientation

Regardless of the context of learning, research consistently shows that the more learners endorse a self-determined orientation, the more likely they are to engage deeply and positively with the learning process and the more likely they are to experience positive outcomes. Compared to less self-determined learners, they exhibit greater motivational intensity and greater intention to continue studying the language even after the course is completed (Noels, et al, 1999, 2001; Noels, 2001a, 2005; Comanaru & Noels, 2009; Sugita McEown, Noels, & Saumure, 2014). They also report using more active learning strategies (Ehrman, 1996; Tachibana, Matsukawa, & Zhong, 1996; Bonney, Cortina, SmithO'Darden, & Fiori, 2008), and the process of learning is likely to be more enjoyable, as learners experience less anxiety, greater curiosity, and have more positive attitudes in class (Ehrman, 1996; Noels, et al, 1999; Noels, 2001; Carreira, 2011). Perhaps not surprisingly then, they have greater success developing their communicative competence, as evidenced by better grades, greater speaking and reading proficiency, and greater grammatical sensitivity (Ehrman, 1996; Alsheikh & Elhoweris, 2011; Kim, 2011). They are also more likely to experience more positive outcomes outside of the classroom, such as greater frequency and quality of contact with the target language community, greater willingness to communicate in the target language, and more use of the target language outside of the classroom (Noels, 2001; Peng & Woodrow, 2020).

Based on these research findings, we can posit a causal sequence in which motivational orientations predict engagement in the learning process, and this engagement predicts a variety of linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes (Noels, 2009; see also Vallerand et al., 1992,1993; Skinner, Wellborn, & Connell, 1990; see Figure 4). Recent research, however, suggests that this unidirectional causal sequence might not be quite accurate, and that a more dynamic model involving reciprocal relations between variables over time might

better describe the motivational process. We examined motivation in English Canadian university-level learners of French over their first semester of their French course, and we found that intrinsic motivation predicted greater effort in language learning, but only from the midterm to the end of the course. Instead, we found that students who invest effort into learning the language at the beginning of the course, come to like it by the midterm, and this greater engagement causes them to become increasingly engaged by the end of course. Moreover, greater effort continues to “feed” greater intrinsic motivation throughout the course: it seems we come to like what we invest our energy in, and over time, we engage more in the activity we find enjoyable. Thus the results suggest that it is better to think of the relations between these variables as a dynamic motivational system. An implication of such a model is that the dynamic of a student’s motivational process could be changed by either encouraging the student to work harder or, later in the course, by helping the student to find pleasure in learning the language.

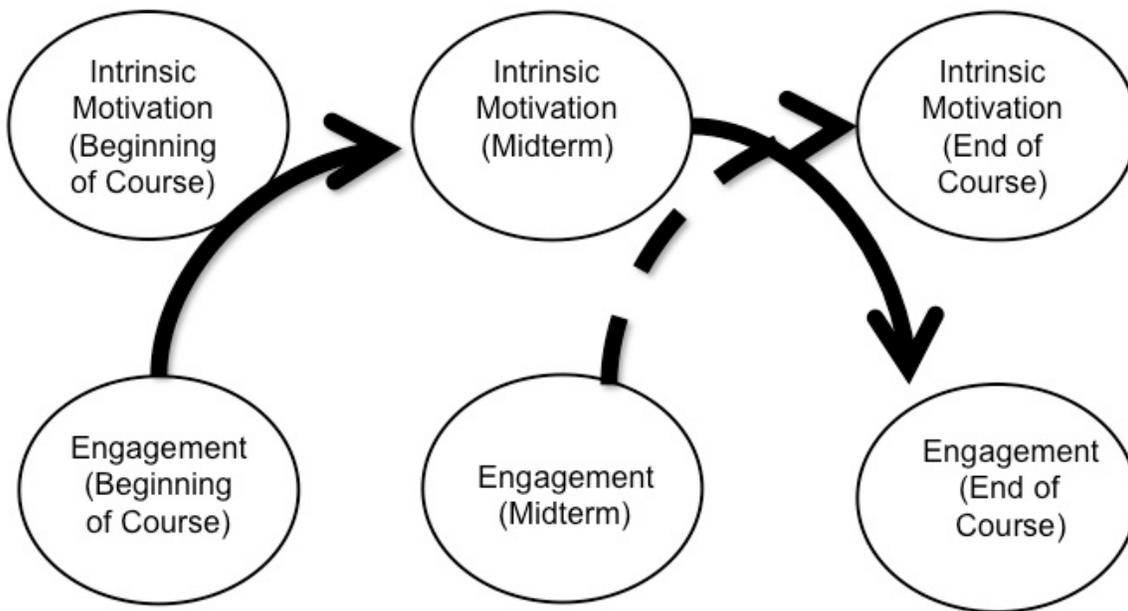


Figure 3. Dynamic flow of engagement and motivation.

Supporting students’ motivation

How can teachers foster a self-determined orientation in their students? In their Self-Determination Theory, Deci and Ryan (1985, 2002) posit that teachers (and others) can foster learners’ self-determination and engagement by supporting learners’ basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy refers to a sense that one has made a conscious and voluntary decision to engage in a personally relevant activity.

Competence refers to the sense of being effective in performing the activity and having the capacity to rise to optimal challenges. Relatedness refers to a sense of secure and satisfying connections with others in one's social ecology. Teachers can support these "needs" by through their teaching practices (Noels, 2001a; Wu, 2008). A teacher can encourage (or discourage) students' feelings of autonomy by providing opportunities for students' to make choices that allow them to learn the language in a way that is relevant to them. Assor Kaplan and Roth (2002) found that the best promoter of autonomy and engagement was linking the students' personal interests and goals to the schoolwork. Teachers can support competence by providing clear goals, and learning frameworks (Jang, Reeve, & Deci, 2010). Teachers can promote a sense of relatedness by expressing interest and empathy, and assuring students' security during the risky business of language learning.

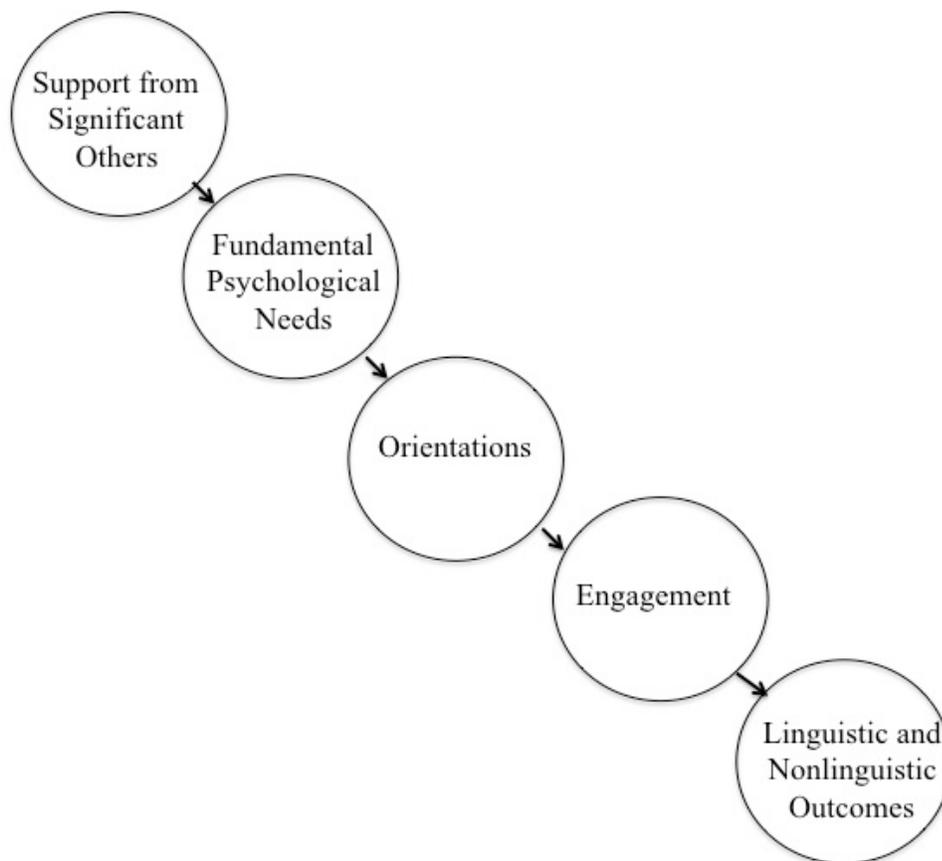


Figure 4. Hypothesized causal model of the motivation process.

To test this more complete model, we asked university students enrolled in diverse language courses about their motivational orientations, their feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and their perceptions of their teachers' support of their autonomy, competence, and relatedness. We used the same longitudinal design as in the earlier study, following students from the beginning of their language course, through to the midterm and then to the end of the semester. As with the findings reported above,

we found that these variables are interrelated, but their relations were more complicated than the unidimensional causal model proposed by the theory. As portrayed in Figure 5, throughout the course, the more students reported that they were learning the language because it was intrinsically interesting and enjoyable, the more they later felt autonomous. Although these two variables are related, the pattern contradicts the hypothesized causal direction, in which a student's sense of autonomy predicts a self-determined orientation. We also did not find support for the simple hypothesis that (perceived) autonomy support from the teacher at the beginning of the course affected students' feelings of autonomy and intrinsic motivation later in the course, but instead the converse: the more a student felt autonomous and intrinsically motivated at the beginning, the more they felt that their teacher was autonomy supportive by the midterm. In the later half of the course, the relation between (perceived) autonomy-support from the teacher became reciprocal, such that the more the teacher was perceived as autonomy supportive, the more the student felt autonomous at the end of the course (consistent with the hypothesis), and vice versa. In sum, we see again reciprocal relations that this time suggest that teachers not only affect students' motivation, but students influence what the teacher does (in so far as students accurately report their teachers' actions; cf., Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008; Bernaus & Gardner, 2008).

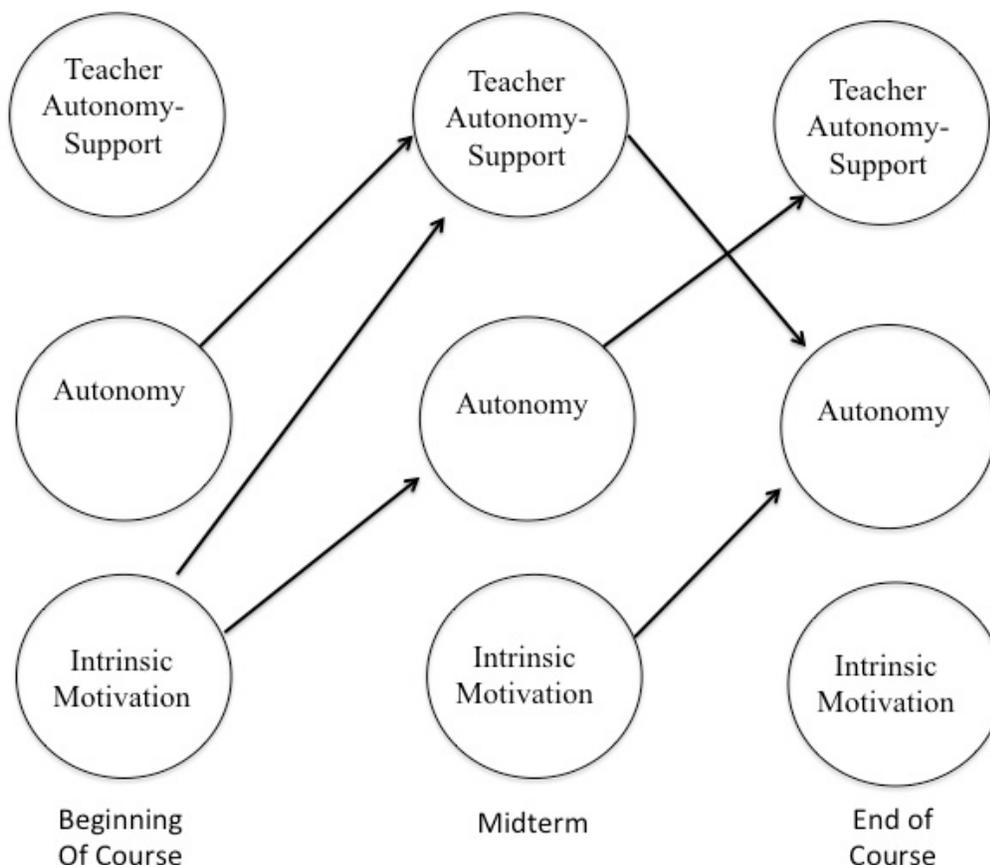


Figure 5. Causal model of the motivation process based on student responses.

Supporting Teachers' Motivation

The results showing that teachers and students can reciprocally influence on another are intriguing. We decided to follow up this study with a complementary examination of language teachers' motivation towards their work to see whether their perceptions of students and significant others impact their motivation (Noels & Sugita McEown, 2015). Members of TESL Ontario completed an online survey assessing their motivational orientations towards their work and their engagement in their teaching (defined in terms of energy, dedication, and absorption); the support they felt they received from their immediate supervisor in terms of autonomy, competence, and relatedness; and how engaged they felt their students were in learning the language. The results showed that the more they endorsed a self-determined reason for learning the language (i.e., the more they found teaching to be intrinsically rewarding, personally important and consistent with their sense of self), the greater was their energy and dedication to teaching, and the less they reported intentions of quitting the job. More controlled orientations (e.g., feeling that they were doing the job for the salary or because they felt obligated to continue) were unrelated to these outcomes, and having no reason for teaching (i.e., amotivation) was related to less energy, less absorption and dedication to teaching and a greater intention to stop teaching in the near future.

The analyses also indicated that the teachers' orientations were linked to their perceptions of their immediate supervisor. The perceived warmth and interpersonal involvement of the supervisor (i.e. their relatedness) supported teachers' intrinsic and self-determined motivation. The more the supervisor was perceived to support the teachers' autonomy, the more likely teachers were to report that they were teaching because it was personally important and a central way in which they self-identified (i.e., identified and integrated regulation, respectively), and less likely they were to report that they were teaching because of the external rewards, such as salary and job security, or because they felt obligated to do so (i.e., external and introjected regulation, respectively).

Although the supervisor had an important impact on teachers' orientations to their work, the (perceived) students' engagement was also a strong predictor of these motivational orientations. The more teachers perceived their students to be engaged in learning, the more they reported that they were teaching the language because it was personally important, was consistent with their sense of self, and yielded a sense of flourishing. If students were perceived to be disengaged, teachers reported a less self-determined orientation and were more likely to say that they were doing it because they had to (i.e., for salary, security, feelings of obligation), and that they had no good reason for learning the language (i.e., amotivation). This pattern of findings suggests an important reciprocal connection between what teachers do and what students do, and suggests that greater research attention to the teacher-student relationship in language learning contexts is merited.

Conclusion

In sum, I have argued that a useful way to frame students' reasons for learning a language is in terms of how much those reasons reflect greater and lesser self-determination. A more self-determined orientation has a range of implications regarding the kinds of outcomes that we generally hope will be developed in a language course. That said, the relations between students' orientations and their engagement in learning is complex and variable over time. Despite this complexity, teachers can promote a self-determined orientation in their students by promoting their sense of autonomy, competence and relatedness. Not only can such an orientation foster greater student engagement and positive learning outcomes, it might also have important implications for teachers' own motivation.

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PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

LINC Classes in an Employment Centre

By Lea Westlake, Madeleine Nerenberg, and Bridget Glassco

At the TESL Ontario 2014 Panel Discussion titled *Transcending Boundaries of Language and Learning*, CIC outlined key initiatives for language training delivery in Canada. One of these initiatives was titled “Partnerships and Collaboration”. At KEYS Job Centre, this is the name of the game.

[KEYS Job Centre](#) is a community-based employment centre in Kingston, Ontario. In addition to an array of employment programs and services available to newcomers, KEYS offers a variety of settlement and workplace English classes for CLB 3–8 learners. The collocation of a LINC program within a job centre is unique in the ESL community, and this partnership offers many opportunities for collaboration between programs and staff that provide an enriched experience for newcomers. This article will:

- provide a brief history and profile of KEYS,
- summarize its programs,
- explain how clients use and navigate our services, and
- highlight the benefits of having English language training and immigrant employment services in the same organization and physical space.

History and Profile

In April 1983, Kingston Employment & Youth Services, (now KEYS Job Centre), opened its doors as a branch of the John Howard Society, with a focus on helping at-risk youth find and maintain jobs. Over its 30+ years of service in the city of Kingston, KEYS has expanded its focus and delivered projects and programs to the whole community. In 1998, KEYS began delivering the Job Search Workshop program for newcomers, and in 2006, we developed a partnership with Immigrant Services Kingston & Area (ISKA) for the delivery of employment-focused settlement services.

Currently, KEYS operates out of five offices in Kingston and surrounding areas, with our central office located in the downtown core. We have over 50 staff members and are funded by multiple federal and provincial departments. Our LINC program serves roughly 85 to 100 learners every year. Our classes have small computer laboratories and access to laptops. Reduction in funding from Citizenship & Immigration Canada has led, in recent years, to the cancellation of our evening programming and child minding services. We offer transportation support in the form of bus tickets and free parking and now advocate

for access to affordable childcare through childcare subsidies. Looking to the future, we are in the process of developing blended and online learning options and implementing Portfolio-Based Language Assessment (PBLA).

Programs for Newcomers

Our ESL program consists of settlement themed and skill based classes. We also offer workplace English classes and IELTS/TOEFL/CAEL preparation. We are an official CAEL testing centre. These ESL programs are just one component of KEYS's innovative approach to immigrant employment programming. KEYS regularly runs Job Search Workshop, a federally-funded program providing newcomers with pre-employment information on the Canadian labour market, as well as insights on Canadian workplace culture. The Professional Mentoring Partnership offers skilled immigrants the opportunity to connect with local professionals in the same field for mentoring and networking purposes. Several formal sector-specific networking receptions are hosted by KEYS each year, connecting immigrant job-seekers and local employers in a fun and relaxed atmosphere. Those seeking in-depth information about the local labour market have the opportunity to meet with Kingston Economic Development Corporation (KEDCO)'s Human Resources and Labour Market Specialist at Coffee with KEDCO, a monthly event hosted by KEYS. Finally, KEYS houses the CARE Centre for Internationally Trained Nurses Kingston office and works closely with the Kingston Case Manager to support internationally-educated nurses in returning to practice.

Most of these programs are designed to provide immigrant job-seekers with the opportunity to practice their language and networking skills and make the local connections they need to access the hidden job market. In consultation with their colleagues, LINC teachers help their students prepare for these activities in order to make the best first impression. A major event for KEYS's immigrant services team is Diversity Works, a free annual one-day symposium bringing together immigrants, local businesses, and community organizations to share knowledge, build contacts, and promote the importance of international talent to the local economy. LINC students are invited to participate in various ways and are trained as table facilitators at the networking lunch, supported in this role by their LINC instructors. One facilitator said of the experience, "I think this is a very good opportunity for me to improve my communication and leadership in English. This conference help me both built my self-confidence and expand my social-net in local community. I hope I can have more opportunities to involve in the community activities" (via anonymous feedback form).

In addition to these immigrant-specific programs and events, newcomers have access to other free services offered to all job-seekers in the community. At any time, they can visit the Employment Resource Centre staffed with local labour market information experts and access technology and information to assist with their job search. Regular workshops such as Steps to Resume Success, Inspirational Interview, and Practically Hired present

cutting-edge information in an engaging and interactive format. Some newcomers benefit from customer-service training opportunities such as Smart Serve and Service Excellence, as well as programs specifically offered to youth, people with disabilities and older workers.

Navigating KEYS Services

When a newcomer first approaches KEYS, their first meeting point is with an immigrant employment specialist. Together, they identify the programs and services at KEYS that would be most beneficial. Every client follows a different pathway, uniquely suited to their specific situation. Here are two examples:

Client A

LINC → immigrant employment specialist → employment services & professional mentoring → employment

A banking professional from Iran, Client A came to KEYS to improve her English language skills in preparation to enter the workforce. Her LINC instructor recommended that she meet with the Immigrant Employment Specialist who referred her to further Employment Services to develop her resume and hone her job search skills and to the Professional Mentoring Partnership. She was matched with a local financial services professional and the pair prepared for interviews by learning and practising occupation-specific language and role-playing typical scenarios that she might face in her work. She also participated in several special events to develop her presentation and communication skills, build her network and learn more about her new local community. Within six months, she had secured a position in a bank, commensurate with her education and experience. She attributes much of the success she has had to the support, training and guidance received at KEYS.

Client B

LINC → immigrant employment specialist → employment services & JSW → employment → professional mentoring

An IT professional from Latin America, Client B learned about KEYS prior to moving to Kingston and says it was his first stop upon arrival. With a CLB level 4, he enrolled in the LINC program to upgrade his language skills prior to looking for work and with hopes of learning about life in Kingston. His LINC instructors connected him with the Immigrant Employment Specialist who referred him to the Job Search Workshop (JSW), where he learned the basics of employment in Canada. He was also referred to an employment counselor, who gave him one-on-one assistance with resume writing, labour market research, job search and interview preparation. Once he landed a contract for a part-time IT position, he dropped down to part-time classes with the LINC program. Within several months, he had secured a full-time position and has since been promoted to a manager-level role within the same organization. Having established himself professionally, he felt it was time to give back to KEYS and to his new community; he now volunteers as a mentor

in the KEYS Mentoring Partnership, assisting newly arrived IT professionals to make connections and find opportunities in their new city.

The Benefits of this Partnership

By working in the same physical space, LINC Instructors and Employment Service professionals meet and plan together. By doing this, they gain a better understanding of the true needs of immigrants. LINC instructors get up-to-date labour market information that makes their classroom instruction more relevant and targeted. They also have a complete understanding of the employment programs and services available and easy access to the people who run those programs.

For newcomers, learning English and finding employment are integrally linked, so having these services in the same building makes life a little bit easier to navigate. One student says, “I am very grateful for all the services offered by KEYS. I appreciate the friendly ambiance and the complete understanding of my needs there” (via anonymous customer feedback survey).

The ways in which these services interact and collaborate benefit newcomers and, ultimately, the local community. We give the last word to KEYS Director of Programs, Gillian Watters: “Language training is most effective when it is appropriate to people’s life situations. It should include information about Canadian culture, soft skills training, and practical workplace language skills. Bringing employment services into the ESL classroom and bridging students into KEYS employment programs is a way to create synergy between two important aspects of social and economic inclusion. Frankly, it just makes sense.”

Author Bios

Lea Westlake has worked as an instructor, department head and curriculum developer/writer in ESL for over 20 years in high school, university and community settings. She is currently a LINC instructor at KEYS.

Madeleine Nerenberg is an Immigrant Employment Specialist and the Immigrant Services Program Manager at KEYS. She has been delivering individualized employment services to immigrant professionals and immigrant job seekers for over 5 years.

Bridget Glassco coordinates the Professional Mentoring Partnership at KEYS, helping to connect skilled immigrants with local professionals for mentoring and networking. Bridget has a background in ESL instruction and has taught in Mexico and Quebec.

AN INTRODUCTION TO TESL ONTARIO'S WEBINAR SERIES

By Christina Cole, TESL Ontario

Six months ago in September 2014, the TESL Ontario webinar series debuted. Many months of intense work, collaborative planning, virtual meetings, training, developing a database and recruiting potential presenters culminated in the delivery of eight webinars this fall. In October the webinar administrators, Christina Cole, Jen Artan, and Francine Kalogris, presented at the TESL Ontario conference. Even though we had been working closely with each other for many months, it was the first time we had actually met face-to-face. For those who were unable to attend that presentation, I hope this article will accomplish some of the same aims, although without some of the great graphics and the catchy Powtoon cartoon designed by Jen.

Our goal for the TESL Ontario 2014 conference presentation was to familiarize TESL Ontario members with the series, provide an overview of the project and demonstrate the process of accessing the webinars. We also wanted to solicit feedback about what members would like to see in the future. We had initially conducted a survey of members on the TESL Ontario website regarding preferred topics and times. That is how we arrived at the choice of Wednesday and Sunday evenings from 7–8 p.m to run our webinars. We found this to be successful, and were looking for more useful feedback.

The goals and vision of the TESL Ontario Webinar project are to provide current, relevant and interesting webinars for members of TESL Ontario on a range of topics that reflect the needs of the community. In addition, the webinars provide opportunities for TESL Ontario members to obtain Professional Development hours (one hour credit for each webinar hour attended). Above all, the webinar series is designed to foster collaboration and engage the TESL Ontario community. Members who choose to do so can develop online presentation skills. We are always on the lookout for presenters and a [contact email](#) is provided at the end of this article. If you have a topic related to ESL that you feel you could explore in a presentation with a powerpoint, then it could be turned into a webinar (with the powerpoint as a pdf).

You can find a [how-to video](#) on the TESL Ontario homepage under [WEBINAR SERIES](#). This link also gives the latest information on upcoming webinars. The number of TESL Ontario group members registered on [Tutela](#) has recently topped 500.

Read more

Read more

Read more

- Membership Centre
- Accreditation
- PTCT Training
- Registries
- Conference
- Affiliate Chapters
- Volunteers
- ESL Week
- Publication
- Research
- Media Corner
- Webinar Series

TESL Ontario

TESL Ontario, established in 1972, is a non-profit organization serving the needs of teachers of English as a Second Language and English Literacy Development. In its commitment to professional development and advocacy, TESL Ontario addresses the range of competencies, experiences, and issues which influence the success of immigrants, refugees, visa students, and others who are learning English.

[Read more](#)

Event Calendar

« Thursday, January 1 »»

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31



Chair's Message



While the 42nd TESL Ontario conference is behind us, I am certain that the great ideas that were shared will continue to inspire us well into the next year. Thank you to all the presenters, panelists, vendors and sponsors whose contributions and participation were integral to our success this year. A special

TESL Ontario Homepage with Link to Webinar Series

You may be asking yourself “what is a webinar?” A webinar is an online seminar presented over the Internet. A presenter delivers a presentation and participants have the ability to interact by offering comments or questions in a chatbox. Normally only the presenter and moderator have audio capability since too many people talking at once would be chaotic. Similarly, webcams are not usually used as they take up a large amount of bandwidth and slow the process down considerably. Moderators have multiple duties, but their chief role is to ensure that the webinar runs smoothly with as few technical glitches as possible. They help the presenter become comfortable with the BBB platform and do run-throughs prior to the actual webinar date. We currently have five moderators but hope to add more in the near future. Moderators assist with four webinars per year on average. Webinars are becoming increasingly popular as a way of reaching people spread over a wide geographical region and are often used for training and educational purposes. Tutela and [English Online](#) both began offering webinar series in 2012. (As a point of clarification, the Tutela webinar series is separate and distinct from the TESL Ontario webinar series, although both are hosted on Tutela. Tutela began its series in December 2012, while TESL Ontario’s series exclusively for TESL-Ontario members began in September, 2014.)

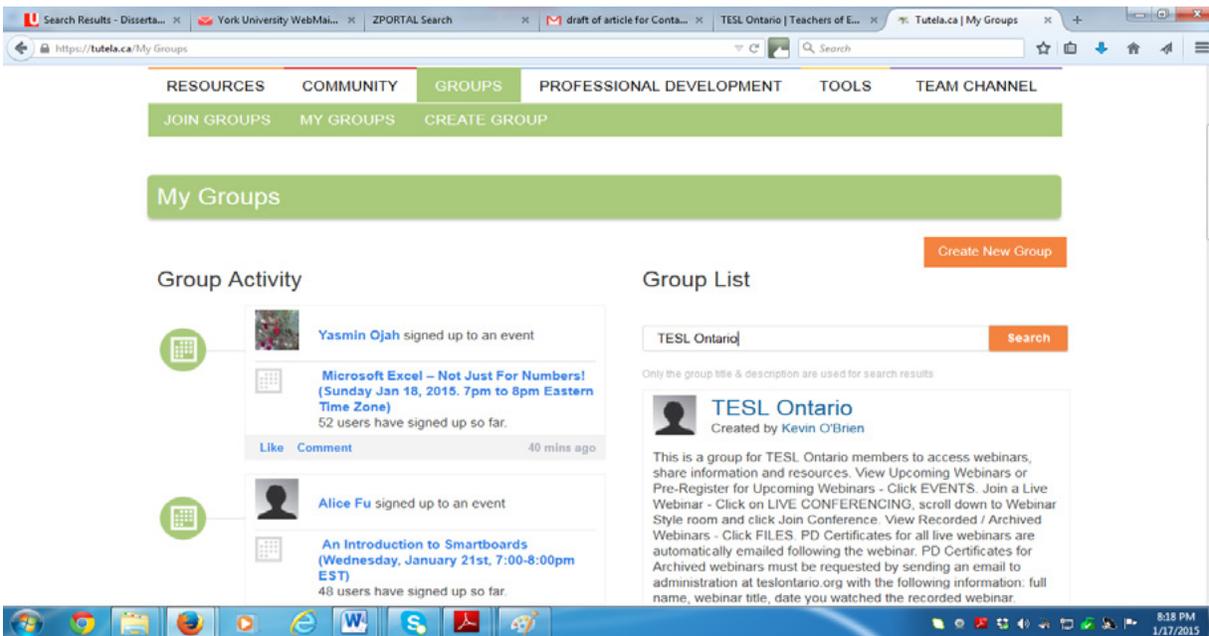
The Platform

When Jen, Francine and I began our webinar administrator duties, our first order of business was to be trained in Big Blue Button, the platform which is used by Tutela, and which we use for the TESL Ontario webinars. Diane Ramanathan who moderates the Tutela webinar series was (and continues to be) extremely helpful in making us comfortable with the BBB platform. Both Tutela and TESL Ontario use the Big Blue Button platform, which is free and open source. This means that it doesn't have all the bells and whistles of some other web conferencing programs and necessitates a much less sophisticated delivery of the webinar. For example, presenters' power points must be uploaded as pdfs and BBB does not allow the presenter to share the desktop and show actual programs such as Powerpoint, Excel or Word or even websites. This has made it quite challenging for the presenters in our Technology for Beginners series who are delivering webinars on how to use these software programs. Nevertheless, they have done an outstanding job.

The TESL Ontario webinar series is divided into two streams: Technology for Beginners and General ESL topics. To date we have been able to schedule one webinar a month in each of these streams (Sunday evenings 7–8 p.m. and Wednesday evenings 7–8 p.m. respectively). The latter has a broader, more general ESL scope but also includes webinars on more advanced technology topics whereas the former is designed to ease ESL instructors with little technological expertise into using technology in their classrooms.

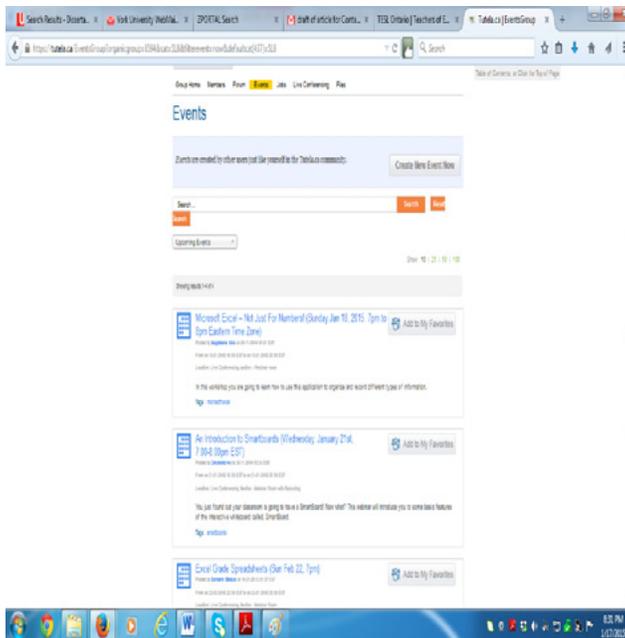
To Take Part

The TESL Ontario webinars are located **inside** the TESL Ontario group within Tutela. This means that you must be a member of both Tutela and the TESL Ontario group within Tutela in order to participate in the webinars. You must first request to join Tutela. Then, once approved, you must request to join the TESL Ontario group. Both require approval time for joining so it is best to do this well before the date of the webinar you want to participate in. Once you are a member of Tutela, you can log in and search for the TESL Ontario group in the Groups tab and request to join. Once you have this second approval, the TESL Ontario group will automatically show up in MY GROUPS so you will only need to look for it there. Click on the title TESL ONTARIO to enter the group.

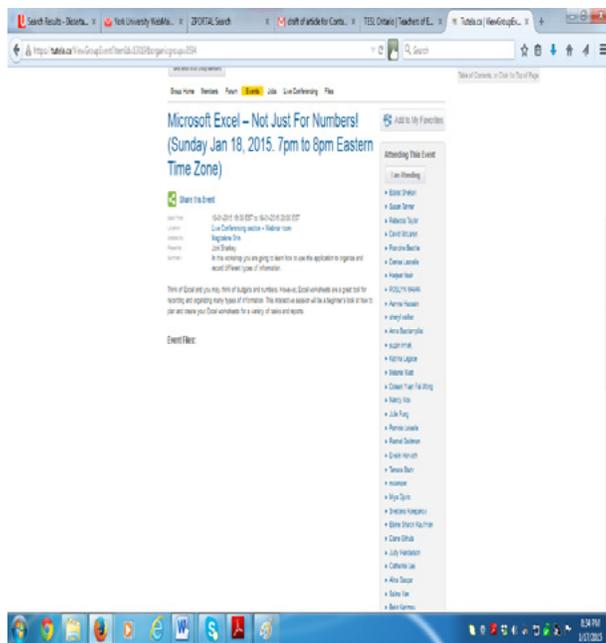


Where to Find the TESL Ontario Group

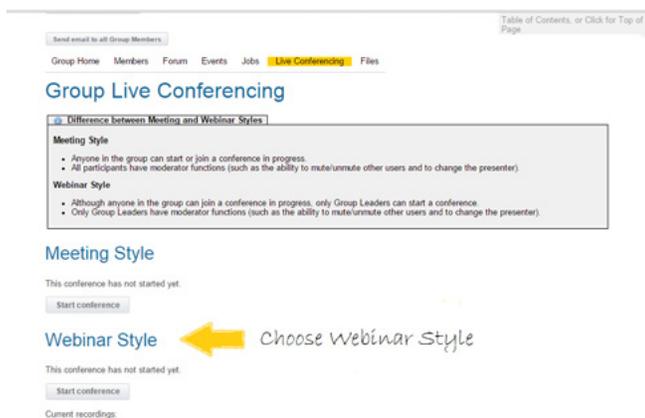
In order to register for a webinar, you should go to the tabs located **inside** the TESL Ontario group and click on the EVENTS tab. You will see a list of upcoming webinars and, once you click on the title of the one you want to attend, you can then click on the I AM ATTENDING box to pre-register. This will ensure that you get a reminder email to the email account that you used when you signed up for Tutela. The next screenshot shows the Events tab for January/February 2015.



Events Tab for January/February 2015

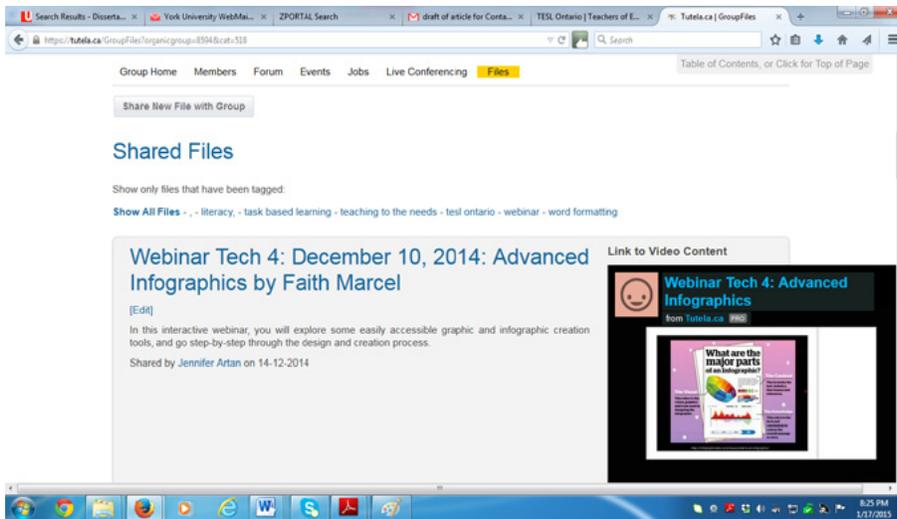


How to Pre-Register to Attend a Webinar



How to Join the Live Webinar

On the day of the webinar, click on the Live Conferencing tab (two tabs away from the Events one) and join the conference that has begun. Choose the one that says **WEBINAR STYLE**, **NOT MEETING STYLE**. Unfortunately we are unable to display the name of the webinar here, but it will say that the conference has begun and there will only be one at that time. You will need to do an audio check and click LISTEN ONLY. Click ALLOW and then JOIN Audio”. If you are looking to view an archived webinar that has already passed, then you will find it under the FILES tab in the TESL Ontario group on Tutela (as long as it has been uploaded.) Just click the PLAY button on the video to watch the archived webinar.



How to Find an Archived Webinar

Generally webinars are uploaded within a week unless there are some unexpected glitches. Some tips about accessing webinars are to use Firefox or Chrome as your web browser. They work somewhat more smoothly than others. If you have difficulties hearing the audio upon entering the conference room, type a note to the moderator in the chatbox. She or he may suggest exiting the room and reentering. This sometimes solves problems. If all else fails in terms of hearing the audio, you can always call in using a toll-free number and a pin code which will be displayed in the chatbox. You must have Adobe Flash player to view the webinars so make sure you download it in advance. Don't turn on your webcam as it will slow down the presentation and you will be asked to turn it off. Make sure your Java is up-to-date.

For Presenters

For every presentation, presenters receive five PD hours. If you are considering volunteering to present a webinar, here are some quick tips. Make sure that your presentation follows the usual best practices in terms of readability of font size, visual appeal through the use of graphics (using royalty-free images and site resources), and timing of the presentation, ensuring it fits within a 50-minute frame with time for a Q&A at the end. Consider the level of your audience and think about how to engage them by discussing issues relevant to their classroom experience. You can ask questions from time to time and have them chat back their responses. You can also do quick polls by having them raise their virtual "hands" to indicate "yes". Presenters will use an audio headset to make sure their voices are clear. They should also take care that the space where they are presenting from is quiet with no distractions. The best advice we can offer is to watch a few previous webinars to get an idea about how they run.

Summary

There are many benefits to attending TESL Ontario webinars. You can learn current, relevant ideas for your ESL teaching. You can develop your technological skills and learn about new ways to integrate technology into the classroom. You can collaborate with your colleagues and peers. Finally, you gain valuable Professional Development which can be used for your membership requirements (1 hour of PD for every 1 hour watched). Presenters similarly can develop their presentation skills and share useful knowledge with colleagues and log five PD hours. It goes without saying that this kind of experience is a powerful addition to a resume. Currently we are recruiting additional volunteers with the webinar team. Please contact us at webinar@teslontario.org if you have any questions. We are all volunteers with hectic teaching and family lives, but we will get back to you as quickly as possible. We hope to meet many more TESL Ontario members in future webinars.

Author Bio

Christina Cole is currently pursuing an M.A. in Applied Linguistics at York University and researching Technology-Mediated language learning. She has presented at several conferences, including TESL Ontario 2014, on Building Resiliency through Technology. She has taught post-secondary ESL and Communications at Sheridan College for seven years. For the past year she has been a volunteer lead webinar administrator for TESL Ontario's new webinar series. She is actively engaged in using technology as a tool for ESL learning, recently completing a pilot project using web conferencing in her EAP class.

MY STORY OF EXTENSIVE READING

By Pamela Barkwell, Brock University

Once upon a time, in the late 1980s, when I had just begun teaching and was helping to coordinate ESL reading, I was introduced to the concept of extensive reading. In our intensive English language program (IELP), students were encouraged to read—mostly fiction—outside class, at least one simplified reader per week. They were then asked to complete a book report form about the book that they had read as homework. The students were given a grade for the report as a reward; thus, extensive reading was a component of the marking scheme for each IELP course.

The book reports were graded mostly for content and complete answers. We did not want to discourage students from reading extensively by marking up their reports with grammar, spelling, and punctuation corrections. Students were expected to describe briefly the content of the book, to give their opinion of its content and message, and to report on new vocabulary they had learned from the book. Students were asked to share their reports with one another, and sometimes, the reports were posted on the department bulletin boards as examples or as recommendations for books that students should read. These were the days before privacy laws.

Students seemed to enjoy reading the simplified texts. Many of the titles were classics they had read in their own languages, and students also seemed to appreciate the illustrations that often accompanied the stories. All was well in the world of extensive reading, until...

Instructors began to notice that some book reports seemed more and more familiar. They asked, “Didn’t I read this before? This student seems to have the exact same opinion of this novel as his classmate” My colleagues and I realized that students were copying and sharing book reports. Not only that, but we soon discovered that some students were actually selling their book reports to students in different levels and in different terms. So much for a love for reading. I was shocked (and naïve).

I continued to mull this problem over in my mind: should extensive reading be abandoned? Extensive reading was important. It helped to increase students’ vocabulary and reading fluency. I did not want to give up on it, but at the same time, I did not want to condone students’ cheating. And so, I decided to assign an in-class extensive reading assignment. I also knew that marks had to be “attached” to the assignment if I wanted students to participate.

So began “the question of the week” assignment. One day each week, students were expected to answer a general question about the book they had read on their own for extensive reading: for example, “Who was your favourite character and why?”. Students wouldn’t know the question until they got to class. Therefore, they couldn’t prepare an answer beforehand or copy one from a friend. In addition to providing an answer to the question, the students were also asked to list up to five new vocabulary items that they had learned from that book.

This assignment and the parameters of the extensive reading program continued for years. Along the way, there were queries from instructors: “How do I know that the students actually read the book?” “What if the students watched the movie version of the book instead? In fact, I know they did because they write that Tom Cruise is the main character!” I explained that we were providing the students with the opportunity to read extensively and to gather some marks at the same time. We had to trust that our students would read. Those who didn’t would lose out in the end, I said.

Originally, I asked that students complete 10 book review assignments, one book per week (usually simplified at about 60–80 pages) for 10 weeks of a 14-week program. I encouraged instructors to ask students to read fiction as much as possible. After all, narrative writing is the easiest to follow, and it is usually the first type of reading that we do in our native languages, too. Not only that, but students do so much expository reading in the classroom, it is advantageous for them to be exposed to the vocabulary and genres that fiction offers (so says I, the English Literature major!) Teachers asked, “Can students read non-fiction?” Yes, of course, but make sure it is a book, not a newspaper article or a magazine article. Why? Because a book provides students with more content as well as the flow of the narrative and the continuity of extended reading.

Despite my efforts to provide our students with what I thought were the ideal conditions for valuable extensive reading opportunities, I met with resistance, mostly from my colleagues. My fellow instructors wanted the students to have the opportunity to read magazine articles and journal articles. This would allow the students to read up-to-date information on topics of interest to them. They wanted fewer extensive reading assignments so that students didn’t feel rushed and overwhelmed with lots of homework. They felt that students should have a wider range of reading materials made available to them including unabridged novels. All of these requests seemed to contradict everything that I had read about extensive reading and everything that I had been “preaching” for the past 25 years.

Was I being inflexible? Was I outdated? I informally surveyed my students about extensive reading and whether or not they felt it was valuable. Most agreed that it was helpful, and most agreed that reading “books” was a good idea. Were they just trying to please me, though? Some students, including our *Science without Borders* students, requested the opportunity to read scientific journal articles about their research interests. I agreed to this; they were an exception. But for the most part, I continued to encourage students to read books, books that were accessible to them linguistically so that they could read fluently.

My colleagues continued to balk at the number of extensive reading tasks and the use of simplified readers. The readers were old-fashioned, too simplistic, childish. What about e-Readers, they asked? I again surveyed the students: most said they preferred the traditional book when reading for pleasure.

I knew, though, that in order for students to buy into extensive reading, their instructors had to as well. I wasn't about to abandon extensive reading, but I knew that I would have to make adjustments to the extensive reading program if I wanted the instructors to feel positive about it. As a result, I conducted a survey (through Survey Monkey) asking the reading instructors their opinions about the extensive reading assignment. Questions included

- Should extensive reading be a part of the Reading curriculum?
- Should students be required to complete assignments for extensive reading?
- Besides simplified readers, what other types of reading materials do you think students should be allowed to read for extensive reading?
- Do **you** enjoy reading for pleasure?

According to the survey results, the majority of instructors felt that 10 readings per 14-week semester was too many. (So much for **extensive** reading!) The ideal number, according to them, was 5 readings per 14-week semester. The instructors, for the most part, felt that there should be a marked assignment attached to the extensive reading so that students would be motivated to complete them. The majority also believed that students should be allowed to read magazine and newspaper articles for their extensive reading assignment as these were more interesting for students. Ninety percent of the respondents claimed to enjoy reading for pleasure themselves. I asked this question because it was important for me to know instructors' bias towards reading for pleasure.

I faced a dilemma. All of the research that I had read, plus my 25+ years of experience teaching indicated that the more students read at a linguistically manageable level, the more their reading and language improves. I remembered Japanese students from my early years of teaching who would read more than the required one simplified reader per week and whose English rapidly improved. I recalled students sitting in the hallways between classes curled up with their readers enjoying the reading experience, and I remembered students recommending and sharing books (not assignments) with each other, explaining how exciting or interesting the story was.

But times have changed. Students seem to want a quick fix for their English. They want to "rush through" their English courses so that they can study what's important to them for their careers. Studying is expensive. Students don't want to "waste time" studying and learning English. English is a means to an end for our students. And the end for most of our students is a well-paying job. They don't see the value in reading fiction. In fact, many of our students rarely read for pleasure in their native languages, never mind their second, third,

or fourth language! Reading is not a source of pleasure or a form of entertainment for our students. Instructors have been recognizing this for years. And if I admit it, I recognized it, too, even if I didn't want to.

So, I decided to make some changes to our Extensive Reading program:

- Firstly, I reduced the number of extensive reading tasks to five for our low-intermediate to advanced level students. I kept the number at ten for our beginning level students. I still believe that they require more exposure to the language that reading extensively can give.
- Secondly, I allowed intermediate level students to choose magazine articles to read. But the articles must be at least three pages in length. And they must be from a magazine that has been approved by their instructor: *Maclean's*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Chatelaine*, *Outdoor Life*, *Our Canada*. No *National Enquirer* or *Playgirl*!
- I also allow students in our upper-intermediate and advanced levels to read journal articles for extensive reading. Because students are required to write research papers at these levels, students are encouraged to use their research articles as their extensive reading articles, too.
- I still insist on the in-class assignment for two reasons: 1) it reduces students' opportunities to cheat; 2) it lightens the homework load: students only have to read at home, not write a report as well.

When I initially admitted that I had to make changes to the extensive reading program, I was discouraged. In fact, I felt betrayed, in some ways. This had been my baby, if you will. I had promoted and maintained this aspect of the IELP for my entire career at Brock. Why did I have to change it? Why couldn't the students and instructors see my vision? What was wrong with my idea?

This was **my learning moment**: I recognized that change is bound to happen. Student needs are different now than they were when I began teaching. Instructors are different, too. Many of our teachers come from various academic backgrounds and have new and interesting techniques and perspectives to share. Many have taught in different countries and venues where other activities have been used.

I guess what I am trying to say is, "Yes, you can teach an old dog new tricks." I decided that I had to put aside my preferences and perceptions and look at the situation from the eyes of our students and instructors. Extensive Reading didn't have to be eliminated, just modified to suit the changing population of learners.

This experience has prompted me to look at my teaching practice more closely. It has made me aware of a need for flexibility and reflection. It has been an exercise well worth experiencing. After all, we are all learners, aren't we?

Author Bio

Pamela Barkwell is the Academic Coordinator of Reading in Brock University's ESL Services. She has been teaching and coordinating ESL at Brock for over 25 years. She holds a B.A. in English Language and Literature, a B. Ed. in Teaching English as a Second Language, and an M. Ed. in Curriculum Studies and Adult Education. Not surprisingly, Pamela loves to read!

RETHINKING EIL

By Marijke Wertheim, University of Toronto

When I teach methodology to TESOL students, I use the term EIL (English as an International Language) to refer to what was, and sometimes still is, called the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) context. While my courses cover several distinct contexts in which English is taught and used (e.g. LINC/ESL, EAP), EIL is the only context which is routinely confused with a language variety or dialect. None of my students ever talks about “speaking LINC” or “writing EAP,” yet a small but consistent percentage each term refers to “teaching students to speak EIL.” The same phenomenon occurs in the conference workshops I give to experienced teachers on this topic, occasioning anxious questions about how to teach an unfamiliar form of English or comments about students wanting to learn “proper English.”

These concerns, and the misconception they’re based on, are both illuminating and worrying. The underlying assumption appears to be that, if they are not living in an ESL environment (where English is the dominant language outside the classroom), those for whom English is not a first language (L1) are using a new, uniform variety of the language whose features can be codified, learned by teachers, and taught; and, critically, that this variety is in some ways a “simplified” version of standard English. This is cause for concern because it suggests a lack of understanding among teachers and would-be teachers regarding how and why English is used internationally; not a promising scenario given the increasing numbers of international students in our language schools or the number of newly certified teachers working abroad. It also indicates the persistence of an attitude toward the language that is rapidly becoming outmoded and irrelevant. As Nero (2012) has observed, “the spread & natural evolution of English itself, combined with the transience in the population of English-language users, [is forcing] a reexamination of the goals of English-language learning and teaching as well as a reconceptualization of the English language itself along with sacredly held paradigms in ELT” (p. 143). In other words, a shift is taking place in how, where and why the language is used, which requires an equivalent shift in classroom practice that is itself dependent on rethinking what it is we’re teaching. For that to happen, the teacher misconceptions mentioned above need to be addressed.

The why & how of EIL are familiar to most of us. Our classrooms reflect the fact that English is used as a contact language to communicate, on a global stage, among people from a wide range of language backgrounds. Some have spoken English almost from birth along with one or more native languages (as in India or Nigeria), while others have learned it as an additional language (EAL) at school or later in life. But this is not the kind of contact

for which simple pidgins arose and were entirely adequate. In an increasing number of cases, our students' interactions in English, both in person and online, require complex, sophisticated English for professional and academic purposes, in both oral and written form, often on a daily basis. Clearly, a simplified version of the language cannot meet these needs.

At the same time, the English used in these interactions does not have codified features that vary in uniform ways from what we term "standard" English. As Jenkins (2006) has noted, it is unlikely that any such variety will ever exist. Rather, as she points out, "anyone participating in international communication needs to be familiar with, and... use, *as & when appropriate*, certain forms (phonological, lexicogrammatical, etc.) that are widely used and *widely intelligible* across groups of English speakers from different first language backgrounds" (p. 162, *my italics*). The focus on appropriacy and intelligibility transforms these interactions into an on-going process of accommodation based on mutual comprehensibility; that is, the English used by a Japanese, a Norwegian and a Nigerian interacting in Singapore will have to be adaptable to and accommodate differing forms arising from the influence of native languages and cultures, insofar as the differences don't cause communication problems. Since these influences can change with each interaction, and many of the usages involved will be unfamiliar and unpredictable, flexibility of language use is key. EIL is thus not a variety that can be taught; it is, in fact, not a language at all so much as a *context* in which English is used as the medium of communication. Perhaps some of the confusion referenced earlier could be avoided by referring not to English as an International Language (EIL) but to English in an International Context (EIC).

Viewing it in this light clarifies the need for a reconceptualization of the language we're teaching, starting with the issue of *ownership*. As Carrington noted as long ago as 1988, "an international language is not the possession of a specific group. It is public property. It is not the vehicle of a single culture. It becomes the vehicle of any culture to which a user applies it" (as cited in Bryan, 1994, p. 101). As we've seen, use of EIC can be a daily occurrence, and people who "live in a language" for a great part of their professional lives need their own "voice" in that language, a way to express identity. This ability to manipulate language to convey one's personal sociolinguistic reality requires a sense of ownership, a feeling that the language belongs to the speaker, not that it is a foreign language controlled by an Other. Our purpose as teachers, therefore, should be to help our students see English as *their* language rather than the property of you, the teacher or we, the native-speaking population. This is fundamental to achieving the levels of confidence and flexibility that will allow them to manage interaction effectively in the unpredictable EIC environment.

This brings us to the issue of *relevance*, specifically, the relevance of using traditional native-speakers (NSs) as a model for this context. Aside from the thorny issue of defining a NS, such a norm is inappropriate because it's based on a deficiency model which sees any use of English that deviates from the standard (however defined) as "wrong" and therefore undermines the right to ownership of English. Furthermore, as we've seen, EIC

is about interactions that frequently do not involve traditional NSs and require varying types and levels of accommodation to achieve mutual comprehensibility. In this context, any view that labels these usages imperfect or deviant is irrelevant. It misses the point. And to continue to insist on that norm in our classrooms risks making ourselves, as teachers, irrelevant as well. As Brutt-Griffler has observed, native speakers “accept the diversity of their Englishes & do not require of one another to prove competence in English, despite the considerable differences in the varieties of English they speak and the cross-cultural communication problems entailed thereby... This situation must be extended to all English-using communities” (1998, p. 389).

I would argue that this applies to our LINC/ESL classrooms as well. While these students will use English with traditional NSs, they will also interact with increasing numbers of fellow EAL speakers (especially in cities like Toronto, but also in international dealings), so their English needs to be as widely comprehensible and readily adaptable as that of our international students. EIC is no longer limited to countries outside our borders. The fact that “their English” is going to differ in some respects from what we may have traditionally defined as the norm needs to be validated in the classroom, not only because that norm has and will continue to change, but because ownership of English is a vital aspect of the developing hybrid identity, the revalidation of skills and ability, crucial to successful integration as immigrants and professionals.

This rethinking of EIL clearly needs to be reflected in the approaches and practices we adopt in the classroom. Burns (2005) has suggested a series of questions for beginning this process, one of the most important of which is who our students consider an ideal English speaker, and why. Pushing them to look for models among highly proficient speakers in the EIC community challenges the entrenched notion of the NS as the target and validates their ownership of the language. Moreover, the English presented to learners in texts and materials should match the variety they are likely to find outside the classroom, raise their awareness of other varieties, and avoid reinforcing the assumption that there is only one “proper” way to speak. In this regard, we need to provide more opportunities for students to use *each other* as role models of EIC. As Ndebele points out, “English will have to be taught in such a way that the learners are made to recognize themselves” (cited in Jenkins, p. 157).

As noted at the outset, the world of English use is changing, and our students’ needs are changing along with it. English “belongs” to the world now, and we need a new set of assumptions and practices if we want to continue to play a relevant and useful role in that world.

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Author Bio

Marijke Wertheim teaches a wide variety of programs in the English Language Program at the University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies. She has also taught at George Brown College and Humber College, and is involved in teacher training in the TESOL Certificate program at Woodsworth College, University of Toronto, where she teaches Methodology. Marijke is a regular presenter at TESL conferences across the country.

TOWARDS A NATIONAL SETTLEMENT LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAM

Will LINC look the same 5 years from now?

By Brenda Lohrenz, Language Instruction Support and Training Network
and Hanna Cabaj, Toronto Catholic District School Board

Settlement language programming is one of the biggest components of settlement services for newcomers to Canada, taking a substantial part of the overall CIC annual budget for settlement services. By April 2014, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) had completed the repatriation of the administration of all the settlement programs for immigrants from the provinces to National Headquarters of CIC in Ottawa. With all the settlement language training programs across the country (like Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) in Ontario) delivered presently under a central administration, CIC is looking towards the development of a pan-Canadian framework for settlement language training. This article describes initiatives and stakeholders that have the potential to aid CIC in shaping that national vision for language programs for immigrants to Canada.

Avenues of input into federal settlement programming

A national advisory to CIC for settlement programs, the National Settlement Council, has operated since the first national settlement conference held in 2003. While technically an advisory on all settlement services, including language programming, the council's busy agenda did not allow sufficient time to address specifics of language programs. In recognition of the need for a language program perspective, a Newcomer Language Advisory Body (NLAB) was created in 2013, comprising settlement-language stakeholder experts with the mandate of advising on settlement-language specific policies and programming. The NLAB includes language training providers from across the country representing different types of organizations, language assessment centres, curriculum developers and representatives of communities of practice. It has four seats on the National Settlement Council to ensure connection to the larger settlement advisory body.

While settlement-language program umbrella organizations exist only in British Columbia and Manitoba, other important voices in the discussion on the future look of settlement language programs in Canada include TESL Canada's Settlement Language National Network (SLNN), established in 2012, and the various provincial and local TESL

associations. Other possible regional venues for consultation include umbrella agencies, communities of practice and government-led representative groups like the Ontario Coordinated Language Assessment and Referral System (CLARS).

Key initiatives

A number of initiatives have been undertaken by CIC in the past three years with the aim to lead all stakeholders through discussions on current practices and planning of the future shape of Canadian settlement program. These myriad activities will serve to inform the 2015 Call for Proposals for the next multiyear CIC programming cycle.

The National Settlement Conference held in Ottawa in 2013, the first in 10 years, engaged stakeholders from across the country in discussions on all aspects of program policy and program delivery, and allowed for the sharing of experiences, expertise and expectations. The outcomes confirmed the overall lack of awareness of the systems in place across the country, but also a desire to learn from each other and for a stronger national framework. Support was also expressed for a more stable, strategic investment approach by CIC to ongoing Professional Development especially in regards to new initiatives and changes in program delivery or expectations.

The roll out of iCARE (immigration Contribution Agreement Reporting Environment) has meant that all components of settlement programming such as information and referrals, employment, language assessment and language training presently track the services they provide to clients across Canada through a common national database. From a language-training perspective, any LINC training provider can now see in iCARE all LINC language classes being offered across the country, from the Maritimes to British Columbia. This truly is the first time ever in the delivery of language programs to adult immigrants where we can see how language classes are set up and delivered in all regions of the country. It already creates an opportunity for data analysis and experience sharing, and its potential is only bound to grow. For now, all the information gathered through iCARE will provide data for the evaluation of the settlement programs that is planned for 2016/17.

Another initiative undertaken in the recent years—is the national survey of immigrants' settlement outcomes and the survey of staff training gaps in the settlement sector. The settlement outcomes survey, conducted in 2010, was the first large-scale, nationwide study of settlement outcomes in Canada. It collected responses from 20,818 randomly selected newcomers across the country through a questionnaire that contained 51 questions translated into 10 languages. In general, the results of the survey pointed to a positive picture of newcomer settlement. Newcomers in all jurisdictions were satisfied with their settlement and would remain in Canada rather than live elsewhere. Other areas of strong satisfaction were ease with official languages, life essentials, and rights and responsibilities. Moderate levels of satisfaction were associated with service awareness and accessibility and social connection. The identified areas of challenge were employment and foreign

credential recognition and official language skills of newcomers who are not in the labour force. The findings of the survey support the development of a pan-Canadian framework for settlement outcomes with a roadmap for improved newcomer outcomes that guide the establishing of most effective services to newcomers across the country.

In the summer of 2014 CIC conducted the survey of professional development needs of staff engaged in the settlement programs. 2260 responses were received from staff across the country. While the findings indicated a consensus that **ongoing** professional development is top priority, they also highlighted varying training needs for staff engaged in different roles of the program (settlement, employment, child care, language assessment or language instruction). Language instructors expressed less interest in training that would be common to all staff (like effective communication, settlement, culture and multiculturalism for example) but a strong interest in role specific training related to curriculum delivery and classroom management. Top identified training topics were: CLB framework, CLB-based instruction techniques, CLB-based in-class assessment, curriculum and module planning, general TESL methodology, and SLA theory. A lot of interest was expressed by language instructors in the various aspects of the use of technology in language training.

A series of consultative Integration Summits was held across all regions in the fall of 2014. The Newcomer Language Advisory Body (NLAB) did an informal roll up of settlement language discussions from jurisdictional summits across the country and found [many consistencies](#) in the themes that were brought forward. Broad headings included input related to assessment practices and language programming based on the CLB/NCLC (=French language equivalent). Other highlights encompassed newcomers with special needs and language options for labour market entry, as well as considerations for LINC access in remote communities, client supports (childcare, transportation) and LINC contracting. In considering the overall consultative nature of the Integration Summits, this process was an excellent opportunity to network and discuss with the larger stakeholder community. Depending on area, however, NLAB raised some challenges such as insufficient language expertise at the table (including inadequate francophone-FSL representation) and an overall lack of time to adequately prioritize the points brought forward. It is clear that CIC gathered some valuable feedback on various aspects of settlement programming currently in place that will no doubt provide insight into future needs and areas of focus.

Will LINC look the same 5 years from now?

As a result, what can we anticipate with a national language program? Will LINC be the same 5 years from now? The answer is probably “yes and no”. We hope that with all the discussions and consultations, the best of current practices will be maintained and necessary improvements will be put in place. The importance of stakeholder feedback cannot be underestimated in this process.

Currently, in discussions on the future of the settlement language program, focus is on alternative delivery modes and the use of technology in language training, professional development and increased professionalization, and enhanced expertise of the sector, as well as the support for FSL offerings, especially in the context of language minority communities.

Long term priorities place emphasis on the review of language placement tools and assessment practices in use across the country and a revision to the language program curriculum with a view to create a common national approach. The perspective coming into these national initiatives would be to allow for local and regional flexibility while drawing on best practices, sharing of expertise and resources and providing portability of training across the country, at all stages of settlement, from pre-arrival to citizenship. Other areas of examination are the review of existing program structures, setting up of national language program guidelines to achieve better standardization and the study of the relationship between the CLB and other frameworks like Essential Skills in order to enhance client outcomes.

Whatever the future shape and form of the national language program, it is expected to be able to respond to a wider range of client profiles and needs, be available over a wider range of geographic locales and timeframes of the immigration experience, and be accountable to all stakeholders to deliver clear client outcomes and measurable gains. One thing is clear: working within the Canadian settlement sector and the clients we serve will continue to be a rewarding and invigorating experience.

Author Bios

Brenda Lohrenz is Executive Director of Language Instruction Support and Training Network (formerly ELSA Net), a B.C. provincial settlement language umbrella organization. She is co-chair of the Newcomer Language Advisory Body (NLAB) and sits on the TESL Canada Board as chair of the Settlement Language National Network.

Hanna Cabaj is the Coordinator of the Adult Education Program with the Toronto Catholic District School Board and a member of the Newcomer Language Advisory Body (NLAB).

TEACHING SPEAKING ONLINE

A Technophobe's Journey to Online Teaching

By Judy Thompson

Before I was scheduled to begin my presentation at TESL Ontario 2014, I took my place at the front of the conference room at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. A laptop and microphone were provided at the podium. The screen was suspended strategically to the right of the speaker's nest and the projector was already hooked up. Technically, there wasn't much for me to do. I found the USB port, inserted my trusty little red pen-drive and waited for the file to OPEN so I could START SLIDE SHOW. But nothing happened. I knew it! I probably broke the whole darn thing. I'm not simply frustrated with technology, I'm terrified of it. In high school, I could easily have been voted least likely to make a living on a computer. The irony is palpable. This is the unlikely story of my journey from classroom ESL teacher to online aficionado, including a brief description of the equipment I use, the content clients pay me for, and the marketing strategy that brings us together.

At TESL 2014—as I do everywhere else when computers don't behave as I expect them to—I flapped my hands and called for help. Someone in the front row stepped up and I'm not sure what she did but my PowerPoint appeared on the big screen seconds later. It turns out you don't have to be a technical genius in order to make a good living teaching online. What you do have to be is proficient in an aspect of English that people are anxious to acquire, for example business writing or speaking.

My ESL teaching career began modestly at a Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) centre in the basement of a strip mall west of Toronto. I taught the pre-benchmark students. In regular elementary schoolese, that's kindergarten. I loved the LINC program and the logical progression of appropriate grammar points taught at each successive level. I could cheerfully have lived out my entire ESL career teaching literacy in the basement of that concrete block building, but fate had a different plan for me. A phone call at my home one evening in May 1989 changed everything. Destiny was on the other end of the line and its name was Peel Board of Education. A night school ESL Literacy teacher had suddenly quit and they wanted me to start right away. Peel Board was considered the plum job in ESL at the time. In my wildest dreams I never thought I would get a call from them. I said yes.

All teachers worth their salt do more learning than teaching, and for new teachers this is doubly true. I learned plenty in the classroom and even more in the staff room from my incredible colleagues. Since my earliest days as an ESL teacher, I harbored a special interest

in teaching speaking. At the Peel Board, only advanced students were allowed to register for speaking classes. The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) was the pronunciation tool in those days but students found the IPA too challenging to use. It was standard practice to wait until learners' mistakes were fossilized before addressing their speaking needs because IPA was so difficult. (?!#@?) Not much about the way speaking was offered or taught seemed right to me.

I did have the good fortune to team-teach with speaking expert Lydia Aiello, I took a pronunciation course from guru Kathryn Brillinger, and I soon began to develop my own materials. It turned out that creating an effective approach in speaking became the key to my online employability down the road. At that point in time mavericks were not embraced by administration and before long my choices became clear: toe the line with *the way we have always done it* or find another career path.

Fortunately, it was one of those door-closes-and-window-opens situations. There was flexibility for teaching outside the box at community college. I outlined a 14-week speaking course and presented it to Sheridan College in 2005. They ran my *Speaking Canadian English* course because no one there was teaching anything like it.

I taught at Sheridan for six years and wrote *English is Stupid* as the textbook for the foreign-trained professionals' course. Their challenges in listening and speaking prevented these students from working in their professions or advancing in their careers. At Sheridan College I learned I could make a difference quickly for students by teaching them the *patterns* of English conversation that are always true. In the flow of a conversation, students can't access the thousands of puzzle pieces that are the rules and details *about* the language as taught in traditional English classes. They needed the big picture, the model for how conversation works all the time so they could confidently wade in and communicate successfully in any situation, on the fly. I use a learning model comparable to the way first language is acquired before school over complicates the process.

By 2010 social media was set to explode. My daughter filled out a LinkedIn profile for me and for a few weeks she worked on expanding my LinkedIn connections. The head of TESL in Chile had 500+ connections and it seemed like a good idea to invite each of his connections to connect with me. I promptly got kicked out of LinkedIn. As per usual I flapped my hands and called LinkedIn for help. It turns out sending so many connection requests at once is *spamming*. When I convinced them I was truly interested in connecting with English language teachers globally, they recanted, advised me to include a short note with my invitations and I was back on track. Describing myself as a *Pronunciation Expert* in the subheading of my LinkedIn profile was a game changer.

The learning curves at university and as a rookie teacher were nothing compared with the education I was getting in technology. Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter... I was just waking up to what was possible with the Internet and I was making lots of connections too. People all over the world started asking me to work for them. In 2012, Go To Meeting hosted

the Trend Business School interview where I presented my speaking system virtually to 22 teachers and administrators in Brazil. Trend liked my radical approach and hired me to go to Sao Paulo for two months to fast-track speaking for mining and banking executives. Oxford University Press NYC also found me on LinkedIn and hired me to complete the pronunciation section in *Speak Now Book 4*, which I did without ever meeting anyone from OUP face to face.

I still teach for Trend. When a businessperson calls on Thursday because they have to lead a meeting in the States on Monday, Trend pimps me out to them on Skype. The paradox here is: if someone can describe their emergency on the phone, they already speak English but don't know it. What I learned from Trend is that most people know more English than they realize. My job is to help them access what they already know, expediently. Again, students don't need to know every detail I know about English. I give them the picture on the puzzle box and we fill in the few tiny pieces that are missing in order for them to get to conversation functionality quickly. Fluency only develops after learners are comfortable practicing.

- Teaching online is not the same dynamic as teaching in front of a class at all.
- These are my electronic tools:
- *Audacity* – **free** audio editing software that shows amplitude
- *Skype* – **free** voice-, text- and video-sharing software
- *Dropbox* – **free** cloud-stored/shared files
- *Pamela* – **\$90/year** Skype recording program (required by Trend until we discovered we never actually listened to the recorded sessions) now I am using *MP3 Recorder* <http://voipcallrecording.com> - it's **free**
- *English is Stupid, Students are Not* – **\$14.95** – downloadable PDF
- *Teacher Judy's Sound Dictionary* app – **\$1.99** – pronunciation and spelling

The technology is very basic. It would have to be for me to use it. Content is the thing. The buzz is about coaching versus teaching. Teaching is traditional, broad and forgettable: too much information learners don't need, can't remember and won't use. Coaching is customized and razor sharp. It starts where the student is, uses the information they already know, and quickly gets them to where they need to be. The rules and sound sets of most languages are remarkably similar. You get paid a lot more for coaching and making an impact efficiently than you ever will for teaching per se, but you need to know what you are doing. Football makes a good sports analogy. The coach knows everything about the game but doesn't teach everything he knows to every player. A kick receiver needs a different set of skills and information than a quarterback or an offensive lineman.

I know everything that is important about how English conversation works, including the difference between *accent*, which usually isn't important, and *intelligibility*, which always is. I start new students off with a killer assessment tool that includes a short interview

about the learners' needs and abilities. Fortunately for me, it was easy to adapt my speaking program online.

Here's the map I use for teaching speaking. If you study it long enough you'll notice there is no grammar except for the irony in the yellow column that points out native speakers neither pronounce nor listen to grammar words when they are talking. (This is why students who know more grammar than their teachers still can't speak English).

The chart shows a complete *pattern system* in that there is no part of the topic, in this case *conversation*, that isn't included on the chart, and there are no exceptions to any rules. Learners can see where they are, how far they have to go, and that there is an end. They appreciate being able to plot their progress in the overall scheme.

• **Six-Point Guide to Speaking English** •

BASIC			FLUENCY		
1 Sounds	2 Words	3 Sentences	4 Linking	5 Expressions	6 Non-Verbal
<p>English Phonetic Alphabet</p> <p>24 CONSONANTS</p> <p>18 familiar bdfghjklmnpqrstvwyz</p> <p>6 new Sh, Ch, TH, Th, Ng, Zh</p> <p>16 VOWELS</p> 	<p>Syllables</p> <p>1 vowel sound per Syllable</p>  <p>Stress</p> <p>1 Syllable in a word is...</p> <p>longer louder higher</p> <p>... than the rest</p> <p>baNAna</p> <p>Schwa</p> <p>Tiny 'uh' sound in unstressed syllables</p> <p>buhNAnuh</p>	<p>Important Words</p> <p>CONTENT</p> <p>nouns verbs adjectives adverbs negatives</p> <p>Unimportant Words</p> <p>FUNCTION</p> <p>all others – grammar words</p>  <p>uh CUP uh COffee</p>	<p>CC</p> <p>bus stop bu_stop</p>  <p>CV</p> <p>tur_n off _n off</p> <p>VV</p> <p>I am I_yam</p> <p>Start words with consonants</p>  <p>Can I have a bit of egg? Ca ni hava bi da vegg?</p>	<p>English is Idiomatic</p>  <p>blue moon (rarely)</p>  <p>red eye (night flight)</p> <p>Learners Need to Ask</p> <p>What is the expression for that?</p>  <p>When pigs fly... (no chance)</p>	<p>Tone of Voice</p> <p>High-positive Low-negative</p> <p>Notes</p>  <p>what TIME IS IT?</p> <p>Gestures</p> <p>Body Language is 80% of the Message</p> 

• CHANGING THE WAY THE WORLD LEARNS ENGLISH •

TLC THOMPSON LANGUAGE CENTER

For online teaching, speaking English is an ideal skill to be an expert in. I have never met a non-native speaker of English who didn't want to speak English better. Two billion people use English as a first or learned language worldwide and this spells *unlimited market* for coaches.

Here are some tips for finding and serving language learners online.

- Seek learners with resources to pay for an expert but no time for endless English lessons
- Provide a buffet of options: graduate proposals into Budget, Standard, and Deluxe packages
- Outline clearly what content, services, and results clients can expect for the various price points
- Contact HR departments, because they are looking for language coaches/consultants who can impact their company's needs effectively, and they have significant budgets to do that
- Use social media, which provides a plethora of connection possibilities for niche experts
- Hone your teaching skills in a specific area and become the best at teaching that one thing
- Flesh out your social media profiles and participate in groups

Not so very long ago I was completely happy teaching my Adult ESL Literacy class in the basement of a strip mall in Brampton. I didn't own a computer and was secretly hoping I never would. My, how things have changed! But with change came opportunity. To capitalize on the sweeping changes in our industry, I recommend that you differentiate yourself from the hordes of ESL/EFL teachers out there, find a niche with a demand you are passionate about, and become a true expert at teaching it. *Pattern systems* have been developed for grammar, vocabulary building, accent reduction, reading, writing—the list goes on—and produced by Radical English teachers all over the world. People will pay you a lot of money to sit at home in your pajamas and teach them on Skype if they get results faster and better than they ever thought possible. If anything in this article is unclear or you'd like more information, flap your hands and I'll help you.

VIVA LA LINGUA FRANCA

Passing the Misunderstood Hot Potato

By Eufemia Fantetti

Recently, I came across a collection of idioms from other languages online at the TED Blog. As someone else might say, this stuff is the bomb, it's the cat's pajamas! I can honestly say it made my day. If I ever use this translated Thai expression, "One afternoon in your next incarnation," what I really mean is, "it's never going to happen."

I mentioned to a friend at work that I can't understand why someone hasn't published a Big Book of World Idioms: I think this project has New York Times Bestseller written all over it. She asked if I was aware of how big a nerd I was to think such thoughts. If the sensible shoe fits, I'll wear it.

I collect idioms. I keep pestering the Tibetan shopkeeper in my neighbourhood to pass some along, especially since that blistery winter day I stopped by for a cup of butter tea and she gave me this advice: "Don't notice the fly on someone's shoulder and avoid the yak on your face." She insists she can't remember saying it, and that she doesn't really know any expressions that would interest me but I'm patient and persistent. One day I plan to have a slew of yak idioms to combine with all the donkey and wolf ones from my Italian parents. A favourite that my father taught me just last year: "When you are the sheep, the wolf gets ready to eat." Was a truer statement ever uttered in the village? In fact, this is the beauty of idioms, how they reveal the heart of the matter—the root of what matters to a culture.

During my first week teaching a literacy level ESL class, I bumped into one of my students on the stairs at lunch hour. Carlos was from Peru. He had some criticisms about my instruction, he had been a teacher back home. He had trouble forming a complete sentence but wanted to know all of the elements—adjectives, nouns, prepositions. As far as I was concerned, he was putting the cart in front of the donkey. As we spoke, Carlos told me he'd taught drama, that he'd been an engaging and interesting teacher and used many physical techniques to make his students understand the lesson. Then he mentioned that he needed to lose weight, that he ate too many sweets and it showed. Also, it was bad for the health, and could potentially lead to Diabetes.

At this point I gasped. Carlos was a stick figure, small and sinewy. I suspected he carried no body fat at all, and told him so. He clarified, we weren't talking about him but me, not his weight but mine.

I started to laugh and laughed so hard, tears rolled down my cheeks.

Carlos was speaking Spanglish. I can't speak Spanish, so I used my knowledge of Pigeon Italian to piece together our conversation. Some words carried over, like interesante and dramático, and for the ones that didn't I understood because he mimed eating (a lot) and growing a giant Buddha belly. I thanked him for his caring feedback and went on my way, my shoulders still shaking with giggles.

Later, I mentioned the incident to several colleagues. Instead of finding it funny, many found it unsettling and offensive. They suggested I needed to plan a lesson around cultural sensitivity.

I simply couldn't see it as something to be upset about. I told them they should have been flies on the wall the previous summer, when I was cleaning a mirror in my father's apartment and noted something about my reflection. Out loud, I commented that I could stand to lose some weight.

Without skipping a heartbeat my father said, "Yah. You should be lose few pound."

"I can't believe you said that to me!"

father looked surprised. "You want I should be lies to you?"

I understood that Carlos, an older student re-starting life from scratch in a new country, in middle age, had enough trouble just trying to find work that could sustain him and his wife. He was far from home, and trying to communicate, to connect, to be human in the face of adversity I could only imagine.

I'm not suggesting that cultural sensitivity classes aren't important, or that cultural awareness is a simple two-way street. It's more like a six lane super highway that requires some skill to navigate. Listen and learn; there's no need to worry.

Or as they say it in Sweden, there's no cow on the ice.

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