



TESLetter

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

SPRING EDITION, 2006

QUOTES FROM WITHIN:

"A good school is one in which ... all students bring the entirety of their lived experiences for engaging in meaningful conversations that are the mosaic of the school."

"...music provides a welcome break from the class routine and the students love it!"

"Students report a marked improvement in their confidence to look for work and their ability to express themselves in an interview setting."

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Message from the Pres 2

Lesson Success Stories 2

Internet Resources 2

Schools in the Present Time 3

3 New Book Reviews 4

Membership Alert!! 5

Spring PD Workshops 5

ELT Program at PALC 5

New Season, New Look - New Ideas

Spring is a time of new beginnings. This is our first newsletter since the fall Annual General Meeting, at which a new Board of Directors was elected by the membership. This newsletter launches with a new name and new look. And, we introduce you to our new affiliate logo, created by a newcomer to Canada.

As we launch TESLetter, we are very fortunate to have received articles of great interest from contributors who represent a cross-section of Peel-Halton-Etobicoke ESL community! Our readers may look forward to:

- Reading a treatise of 'good schools' in the 21st century;
- Learning about a new book that espouses *classical* music in the classroom;

- Being informed about Peel Adult Learning Centre's new Enhanced Language Training Program;
- Discovering Web-based resources for listening, speaking and writing activities;
- Sharing in a Lesson Success Story - 'Find Someone Who' activity.

This edition of TESLetter is published ahead of our annual Spring Professional Development Workshops for ESL and LINC Teachers, held this year on Thursday May 11. Don't forget to register early for this always popular event. With Spring PD in the air and the newsletter in hand, one can't help but be newly inspired as English teaching professionals!



Winning entry in PHE TESL's new logo contest.

We are pleased to announce the winner of our logo contest, **Tahir Alizada**. Tahir is a recent newcomer from Azerbaijan and has been involved in some big and interesting design projects. We want to thank him for the time spent on this design and wish him much success in the future.

Informing and Training ESL Professionals

Thanks for reading **TESLetter**. By "Informing and Training ESL Professionals," we serve as your voice by bringing issues before TESL Ontario and imparting news about TESL membership/renewals, benefits and PD. We also assist in members' pursuits of excellence by providing informed opinion on teaching

resources, sharing lesson ideas, and offering Affiliate-driven PD activities plus links to the activities of sister TESL affiliates. We have the 2nd largest membership in Ontario with 500+ members. We are a democratic organization led by a tireless board. You, too, are encouraged to participate on behalf of the Affiliate:

volunteer, submit articles, offer experience and opinion regarding teaching resources, share lesson success stories, and serve on committees of interest. Mentor our members; improve yourself! Contact us to find out how.

pheoffice@teslontario.ca

COMING SOON ... the second in Lydia Aiello's Word Pals series. Look out for this book later this year. Her first **Word Pals** is an excellent resource for instructors and students alike.

Message from the President



Vesna Nikolic, PHE
TESL President
(2004-2006)

“The activity is multi-functional as it incorporates the four skills, vocabulary checks and grammar.”

Tell TESL members about useful websites YOU know...



Think about the most valuable experiences from your life. What happened, and who was involved? Chances are that the events that first come to mind are those when you were with someone else, such as family members, friends, students, colleagues, peers, or childhood buddies. That's because our most treasured moments, whether they be family, marriage, friends, or classroom related, are the experiences shared with others. Even laughter is a shared experience. We hardly ever laugh on our own, do we?

Shared experiences are also the fine bond between you, the members of our affiliate, and us on the Executive. Please join us in our effort to create positive shared experiences (PD Events, Newsletter, etc.) and make a difference in the professional lives of our members.

Lesson Success Stories

Contributor: Cathy Davis

My students and I enjoy the Find Someone Who..... activities. The activity is multi-functional as it incorporates the four skills, vocabulary checks and grammar. First, I ensure that the students understand the vocabulary. I elicit the correct form of the questions used in the activity, write them on the board and the students write them on their worksheets.

Find Someone Who..... is physically and mentally interactive. It gives the learners an opportunity to move around the classroom mingling with their classmates. My students love to socialize with me and their classmates. They don't hesitate to include me in the activity because they want to know how I will answer the questions.

After the winner has been declared, the students sit down. I randomly call on students to ask the questions of someone in the class of their choice and I evaluate their performance. Find Someone Who..... is a popular activity in my classes and everyone is encouraged to participate and have fun!

Internet Resources

- <http://www.cbc.ca/ottawa/esl/>
Authentic listening from radio and television.
- <http://esl.about.com/library/lessons/blbordering.htm>
Speaking and listening lessons based on ordering food in a restaurant.
- http://www.novelp.com/great_bathroom_reading/
Includes short pieces from the Uncle John's Bathroom Reader series (little-known facts, figures, and trivia)
- <http://www.englishclub.com/listening/index.htm>
- Listen to the daily news or to poetry.

Feature: Schools in the Present Time



What is an ideal school?

Contributor: Effat Ghassemi

We cannot build strong and vibrant communities that reflect only a part of our population. A society can only be cohesive when it is inclusive. A recent report by Statistics Canada predicts that by 2017, about one-half of the population in the Greater Toronto Area will belong to visible minorities, yet the inclusion of diverse voices and expertise in our public and private institutions sadly lags behind this percentage. According to James and Mannette

(1996), “from a liberal perspective, education is an important mechanism for promoting social justice, enhancing equality of opportunity and providing citizens with the knowledge and skills that enable them to participate effectively in Canadian society.” It is hard to imagine such a disgraceful argument of an exclusive educational system in cosmopolitan Toronto, one of the most culturally, ethnically, racially and religiously diverse cities in the world, but beneath the colourful face of our population and cities, there are still hidden secrets of stigma and racism. The best way to start searching in-depth is from our Educational System – start from our children’s education and classrooms - bring more awareness to all the staff of our school community.

Another author, Carolyn Shields stated that, “Socrates is often credited with the statement that “the unexamined life is not worth living.” Building on this statement, a good school is one that teaches students how to lead an examined life. It may be recognized by the extent to which it facilitates discipline inquiry, careful reflection, social justice, and new understandings about topics that matter” (Shields, 2005).

What we now desperately need is an inclusive school, not a melting pot or homogeneous community that expects students to ‘fit-in’ and ‘assimilate’. A livable school is a school where students are not excluded based on the colour of their skin, their socio-economic status, or their cultural affiliation. In a good school, all members of the community learn from each other, and share their knowledge and experiences. It develops an atmosphere where student can ask and respond to questions freely, reflect and critique, rather than simply receive information. This brings openness to others - to doubt and to inquire rather than dispute and reject.

A good school teaches students to consider both the individual benefit and the collective good. It is a place where the aim should be to care for each other, and where each person is known, supported, and valued. Members of the community contribute differently, yet meaningfully, through their unique talents, interests, and perspectives. Each student’s voice is valued; each person’s perspective is heard and respectfully considered.

A good school is one in which all members of the community accept diversity, and believe in pedagogy in which all students bring the entirety of their lived experiences for engaging in meaningful conversations that are the mosaic of the school. Furthermore, the curriculum should be considered as an examination of what makes life worthwhile. Good schools should use assessment tools for monitoring what is valuable and what is not. It is not sufficient to measure a student’s achievement solely by using tests. If a school promotes a quality of life for all the members of its community, then assessment becomes an important tool within the school environment.

In the twenty first century, an ideal school should transform students and give them the proper tools for a significant change in their lives and in society at large. Let us ask ourselves what kind of society do we want to live in and what kind of leaders do we want.

Contributor Effat Ghassemi is Manager of LINC and ELT at Peel Adult Learning Centre. She has an MA in Immigration and Settlement Program.

PHE TESL members are encouraged to write articles of general interest to our membership about their areas of expertise or about topics that are of interest to English language teaching professionals. Short articles (maximum 500 words) may be sent to the Newsletter Committee via e-mail: pheoffice@teslontario.ca.



“What we now desperately need is an inclusive school, not a melting pot or homogeneous community that expects students to ‘fit-in’ and ‘assimilate’.”



"Whenever I recall
the story of my life,
it is with music."
Lord Tennyson
(1809-1892)

"(Taylor) wrote
this book because
he wanted to
integrate speaking
with grammar."

"...variety of
teacher
strategies to
maximize
learning
styles..."



Review: Modernize Your Teaching with “*ESL Classics*”

Contributor: Daniela Del Mastro

ESL Classics is a multi-level songbook (CLB 2-8) that combines classical music and illustrated verses. The book is divided into nine units. Each unit deals with specific grammatical structures and a theme. Students listen to songs and complete a variety of exercises. These exercises focus on listening, speaking, reading and writing.

If you want an enjoyable way to reinforce vocabulary, this is the ideal book. *The music provides a welcome break from the class routine and the students love it.* The songs are upbeat and easy to understand. Even students who have little or no knowledge of classical music enjoy the songs and are interested in finding out about the composers. Your students will leave class singing!!

Title: **ESL Classics: Songs For Learning English**

Author and Publisher: Maureen Stewart

ISBN: 0-9738288-1-1 (student book); 0-9738288-2-X (teacher's guide); 0-9738288-3-8 (CD);

0-9738288-4-6 (cassette)

Contact: info@eslclassics.com

Review: “*I Can't Believe I Learned GRAMMAR*”

Contributor: Denise Copland

I Can't Believe I Learned GRAMMAR is Andrew Taylor's fifth publication. When I interviewed Andrew, he told me that he wrote this book because he wanted to integrate speaking with grammar. It is communicative, varied in themes and covers many of the speaking/listening Canadian Language Benchmarks from 3 - 6. The text is most useful in LINC Level 4 and 5 classes or equivalent. Seventy-eight photocopiable pages reinforce the ten grammar points contained in this work and the bonus is that Andrew has a teacher's manual currently in progress. He tells me that 90% of this book will be photocopiable. Congratulations on your success, Andrew.

Title: **I Can't Believe I Learned GRAMMAR**

Author: Andrew A. Taylor

Publisher: ESL Trends Publishing (no ISBN at the moment)

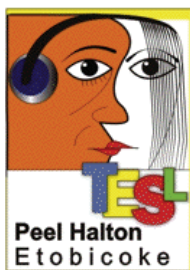
Andrew Taylor can be contacted at: impeccable37@yahoo.com.

Review: “*Falling in Love with Ontario: the Outdoors*”

Contributor: Denise Copland

With great appreciation and love of Ontario's outdoors, Liset's book **Falling in Love with Ontario: the Outdoors** moves through a variety of benchmarks from 1 - 6, and also through a variety of skills, many of them integrated. She has employed a wide variety of teacher strategies to maximize the learning styles we find in any ESL classroom. There is something for all students. Instructors will be fascinated with the amount of knowledge Liset beautifully describes. You will have fun as you lead your group and your students will have a new appreciation of Canada's great outdoors. An excellent DVD is also available - the run time is one hour and lessons time from the DVD is about 40 hours.

Congratulations to Liset. Please check the website at: <http://www.absolute-esl.com>.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS (Exec. Committee):

Past President - Denise Copland

President - Vesna Nikolic

President Elect - Daniela Del Mastro

Treasurer - Maria Ivanova

Membership Secretary - Rehana Zuberi

Recording Secretary - Helen Papadopoulos

Affiliate Director - Denise Copland

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE:

Antonina Boulkanova, Dan Cornish, Carol Culos,

Effat Ghassemi, Vesna Golijanin, Haleema Jafers,

Barbara Lazinski, Rose Shah

Informing and Training ESL Professionals

MEMBERSHIP ALERT!!

The Board of Directors is currently reviewing the Affiliate's Operating Guidelines. Tentative changes are being made and will be posted on the Affiliate website in May 2006 for members to review. Please check the web site listed below and forward comments and feedback via e-mail to pheoffice@teslontario.ca.

SPRING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS FOR ESL AND LINC TEACHERS

When: Thursday May 11, 2006 4:00-8:30 p.m. (early registration deadline is Monday May 1, 2006)

Where: Adult Education Centre South, Peel DSB (100 Elm Dr. West, Mississauga)

What: For more information and early registration form, check the Affiliate's website (address is below) or the flyer circulating together with this newsletter OR phone Maria Ivanova at (905) 629-1873 ext. 234.

Cost (pre-registration only): TESL members (\$10), non- TESL members (\$20); on-site registration on the day of the workshops available for \$25



Enhanced Language Training Program

Contributor: Donna Abs

The Enhanced Language Training Program at Peel Adult Learning Centre was introduced in 2005 to help internationally educated individuals get a new start in Canada. It is open to students with CLB levels 7 in Speaking and Listening and 6 in Reading and Writing, many of whom would be graduates from LINC Level 5. Some ELT programs are sector specific while others are focused more on the language for successful workplace communication.

Students come from a variety of work backgrounds. They spend time polishing their resumes and doing oral presentations of their work-related skills. They learn how to write effective cover letters and practice interview skills. Students do labour market

research to locate companies where they may be able to get unpaid work experience placements and are encouraged to make cold calls to increase their network of contacts.



Students report a marked improvement in their confidence to look for work and their ability to express themselves in an interview setting.

While the focus is primarily on job search, language, and more importantly, communication, is a large part of the 12-week program. There is reading, writing and discussion on workplace culture and appropriate language usage, with group and individual work a part of every day activities. Those from similar fields work together to assist each other in being able to more effectively describe job duties and to do research. They are also assisted in locating mentoring and job shadowing opportunities.

Several students have been successful in getting co-op placements which have led to paid employment.