



# TEAL NEWS

The Association of B.C. Teachers of English as an Additional Language



*Fall Issue 2010*



# Contents

B.C. TEAL Board of Directors	3	Key Concepts and Theories in TEAL by Dr. Li Shih Huang	29-32
Letter from the President	4	Teaching Abroad by Karen Brooke	33
Letter from the Editor	5	Celebrating Pat Wakefield by Nick Collins	34
EFL Collaboration by Curtis Emde and Sarah Finlayson	6-8	3rd Annual B.C. TEAL Fall Interior Conference	35
Teal Writing Competition Winners	9-12	Fall TEAL Session, Nov, 6th 2010, VEC	36
Interior Conference Proceedings-Moving Forward	12	ELSA Report - CCLB by Colleen Rogan	37
The Wired Teacher by Dr. Scott Douglas	13-14	ELSA Upcoming Conferences	38
Teaching Tips by Joel Rhein	15	B.C. TEAL 43rd Annual Conference	38
Book Review, CALD by Marti Sevier	16-24	TCF Awards and Scholarship Announcements	39
1 Topic, 3 Takes	25-28	Research SIG Announcement by Eddy White	40



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BC TEAL News is available through membership in BC TEAL and by special arrangement.

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Contact the editor for specific deadlines.

### **Contributors:**

We welcome articles of general interest to associated members. All material is submitted to the editorial board before being approved for publication. Copy may be edited for length, style and/or clarity without prior notice to authors. Please be aware that submissions may be reprinted.

Copy should be submitted directly to the editor as an email attachment. Advertising material and inserts must be submitted in TIFF, JPEG or PDF formats. For information on advertising rates, contact the Advertising manager or the BC TEAL office.

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This position is voluntary. Primary responsibilities include keeping the client contact list up-to-date; contacting past, present, and potential advertisers to see if they are interested in placing ads in the BC TEAL newsletter, which is published 3 times a year; checking over the newsletter to make sure the sizes and quality of the ads are appropriate; and sending invoices to the BC Teal Administrative Assistant. In addition to contacting advertisers, the Advertising Manager keeps in contact with the BC Newsletter team.

It is not an overly time consuming position and it is rather stress-free. Not to mention, it's an excellent way of contributing to your professional organization. If interested, please contact (editor@bctéal.org) with relevant qualifications and experience. Help Wanted BC TEAL Newsletter

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## **BC TEAL Newsletter Committee**

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## Letter from the President Fall 2010



Dear Members,

I hope the summer months were pleasant for you, whether you taught or enjoyed some vacation time. July and August are often boom periods for many schools, and for others, like our colleagues in ELSA programs, they are wind down months. But alas, here we are again in the fall. Ready or not, a new school year is upon us. This is often a time of great anticipation as we forge ahead into new opportunities and challenges, and I wish you much success in your professional work.

The TEAL Executive does not meet in August, but that doesn't mean the Association is dormant. Preparations are well under way for the Fall Sessions, and our new PD Committee Co-Chairs, Rebecca Kullman and Susan Peake, have been busily preparing for the upcoming Sessions in Kelowna (Oct. 16) and Vancouver (Nov. 6). Be sure to attend one of these events as they are an excellent way to share tips, get new ideas and fresh kicks of inspiration to start off the school year.

You may recall before the August break that the TEAL Board of Directors voted to give Members a bit of a reprieve from the HST by reducing Membership dues, thereby keeping fees at the pre-HST rate. This may not make a great difference beyond affording you an extra latte, but it is a goodwill gesture meant to promote greater participation in the association. Please encourage your colleagues to become members and help us to strengthen the Association; we all benefit when our ranks are bolstered by new and veteran professionals. This is such a key element in promoting and sustaining our area of specialization, and something we must not lose sight of. As seasoned professionals, we play a critical role in supporting newcomers to our field. Likewise, we have much to gain from interacting with the fresh TESL grads who bring us new and inspiring ideas and energy. This interplay can only occur in the arena of a professional association because this is the one place we meet as peers to exchange knowledge. This is not work, per se, but a place for us to interact and grow as professionals.

Thanks as always to our Newsletter team. We have a new Chair, Patricia Nicoli, and the layout of this issue was crafted by a former ESL student and BCIT Graphics grad, Guillaume Pages. I hope you enjoy this edition. From what I've seen, it is a terrific issue.

Enjoy the new year and I hope to see you at one or more of our upcoming events. Please do get involved, and encourage your peers to do so as well. It is remarkably gratifying to participate in the activities of the Association, whether you attend or present at conferences, contribute to the Newsletter or Special Interest Groups (SIGS), or one of our other committees, there are many ways to stay connected. Taking an active role is sure to re-activate your motivation, whether you feel you need it or not.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Galli', written over a light blue circular stamp.

Michael Galli

President - The Association of BC Teachers of English as an Additional Language

## Letter from the Editor Fall 2010



Hello and welcome to the Fall 2010 BCTEAL Newsletter.

A big thank you goes out to Shawna Williams who has been very diligent and has done an exemplary job with the BC TEAL newsletter for the past two years. Shawna has been a tremendous help and extremely generous in sharing her knowledge, experience, and many organized files regarding the undertakings of the newsletter. I am fortunate to have Shawna as my predecessor and I do hope I can fulfill the editor's role to the same standards. Thanks, Shawna!

I am also fortunate to have the responsibility of being a member of the TEAL board. The meetings we attend are very informative. It is evident that each person involved is committed to leading the association in a direction of continued success and improvement in all its endeavors. And I must say we do have a few good laughs at the meetings as well.

There is a wonderful sense of collaboration amongst the board members and committees to offer an array of benefits and services, such as special interest group clubs, writing contests, job postings, scholarships, high impact conferences, and of course the newsletter! (Just to name a few!) All of these events, services, and activities occur due to the collaboration, hard work, and involvement that everyone puts into their position, and the outcomes are fantastic.

I have been given the opportunity to be the editor for BCTEAL. I look forward to meeting and working with many of you in the ELT community. Our theme for this fall issue of the newsletter is "Collaboration". In so many aspects of our profession, collaboration plays a big part in the success of our goals. I hope you enjoy reading this exciting issue and please get in touch to submit articles or to add some news. Suggestions are welcomed!

Happy Reading.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia Nicoli".

Patricia Nicoli, Editor



Questions like 'did you enjoy the course?' tend to result in one of the following answers: 'yes', 'no', or the fence-sittingly apathetic 'so-so.' None of these answers are particularly

complain face-to-face to the teacher, wary of 'hurting feelings.' It's also been our experience that activities that seem to go over well on the surface, complete with raucous laughter and

materials and activities. One way around this situation is to be the first to volunteer an activity or a worksheet that worked well for you in the past when you notice a colleague preparing to teach or present something similar. The colleague is then much more likely to offer something of his or hers to you the next time the opportunity arises. It's a give-and-take that usually happens spontaneously once one party makes the first move.

Another more formalized way to share in the wealth of knowledge, ideas and experience present (but not always fully accessed) in all teachers' rooms is to organize meetings. If several members of your staff are teaching from the same book or the same series of books, think about putting together a Book Group to meet regularly or semi-regularly. At the sessions, which can be as short as ten minutes or for as long or not-long as the members have time for, ideas for presenting particular units or language points or elements of the book are brainstormed. Teachers aren't required to bring anything with them to the meetings, so they can leave their precious & heavily-guarded homemade modal verbs worksheet safely at home, and generate fresh ideas with colleagues. Not only do ideas flow easily and naturally when has colleagues to bounce ideas off of, but you'll find, we believe, that it won't be long before some of these heavily-guarded worksheets start being brought to the meetings unbidden.



useful because they're so vague. Why 'yes'? Why 'no'? The more specific questions you ask, the more useful the answers become. Try variations of the following; grade to level as appropriate:

**What two in-class activities did you find the most useful?**

**Which two/three exercises do you think best helped you improve your English?**

**What two activities did you not find very useful?**

**Which [insert number] activities do you feel didn't help you improve your English?**

These sorts of questions are specific and remain focused on learning outcomes rather than how fun or 'interesting' a given lesson or activity might have been for the student giving the feedback. Such questions are usually best asked in writing, since many learners will be reluctant to

table-thumping, are often singled out for specific complaint by a few students afterwards: such activities are sometimes too personal or simply too silly for some students who might not be willing to say so in the face of giggles and loud enjoyment from their classmates. Learning of these concerns helps the teacher when planning future courses, and such help can be considered as collaboration in absentia.

## 2. Teacher-teacher

EFL teachers can be particularly & sometimes peculiarly protective of



Sarah Finlayson Spalinger has been working in the ESL/EFL industry for over ten years. She spent more than four years teaching English to adults and teens in Zurich, Switzerland and has taught English to adults in Guadalajara, Mexico. She was fortunate to be able to complete her Cambridge DELTA in Barcelona, Spain. She currently teaches international students at LSC Vancouver and works in their professional development program. She enjoys teaching Business English, travelling and learning languages.





### 3. Management-teacher

If your curriculum and core teaching materials have been decided by your institution, the situation can resemble more of an imposition than any kind of collaboration. However, if your institution has an interest in the professional development of its staff, it may be useful to see this development as a collaboration rather than just some training that gets hurled your way from time to time. PD collaboration occurs when management asks directly which areas the teaching staff feels it could most benefit from exploring more in workshops, presentations & on professional development days. It is then management's responsibility to make the arrangements to provide the PD requested, whether by creating a professional development team or department at the school, bringing in visiting presenters or arranging to send teachers to TESL Canada or BC TEAL conferences.

A teaching staff genuinely interested in improving and developing its skills and awareness can only improve the overall strength of the institution's educational enterprise; this cannot fail to lead to more confident, competent teachers and therefore more satisfied students. Even the most bottom-line-watching manager or school director has to admit that having satisfied clients is his or her goal as well, and that in this

case, collaboration between teachers and management is nothing but mutually beneficial.

Sometimes teachers on the front line – that is, in the classroom – may feel secluded from the kind of fruitful face-to-face collaboration that mark so many other professions, even while surrounded by pleasant and interesting learners from all over the world. As we have seen, however, this is just a state of mind, and that the teacher has the opportunity to work

closely with a potential triumvirate consisting of colleagues, their own learners and management. This triplicate collaboration in turn opens up the exchange to a wider scope of colleagues through professional associations and organizations across the country and across the world.



# Teal Writing Competition Winners

By Cary Gilmore, Meliaty Oey, Yuri Goshima, Ikuko Meguriya

## ESL Writing Contest-2010

### Theme: Learning & teaching English

#### Winner

#### Instructor -Category 1

Cary Gilmore (Mary Carol Gilmore)

School: Douglas College, TESL

Citation Program

#### 'On Being an ESL Teacher'

As I was driving to my TESL classes this morning, I pondered how far we've come as a country since it was declared that Canada is a land of two official languages more than four decades ago. Waiting for the light to change to green in New Westminster, I watched three young Asian men looking thoroughly North American in their Adidas gear complimented by iPods. The only person who truly looked out of place was me: I was at

a step beyond the bottom level of what their fellow illegals will do to survive in this country, or any English-speaking country. And therein lays the difference in their thinking: they don't just want to survive, they want to thrive. It hadn't occurred to me until I walked into a class of new Canadian immigrants, that this was what marked them as truly different: there is a pride of having made it this far, they greet you with a smile, and warmth.

When I lived in the United States, and watched the illegal immigrants at work around me, there was a natural furtiveness about their demeanour that I came to expect.

The workers never greeted you or looked you in the eye, they didn't come there to learn or speak English, only to earn money and send it back home as quickly as they could. There

here, even when they came from such uncertainty. That was an unexpected treasure.

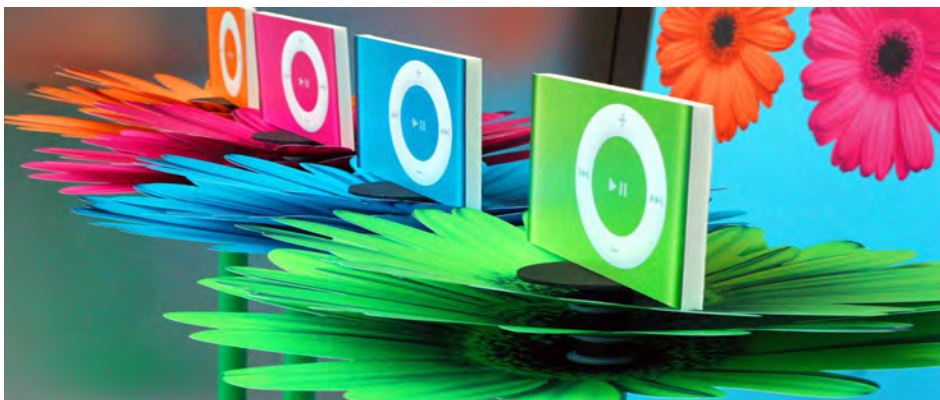
Also, their individual concern over me each night when I came to teach was delightful to watch. These were mothers, young workers, and businessmen, traipsing into class after a long day themselves. Yet, they found room in their hearts for my life, how my practicum was going. At the end, I'll never forget the sweetest woman asking me how I think I did, and how I felt my own teacher's evaluation would be of that evening's lesson. She was so concerned that it all went well for ME.

I had spent the last several weeks trying to evaluate their levels of learning, and trying to take some good lessons, some "tricks of the trade" with me by watching my practicum supervisor.

Of course, I did take note of what activities worked well, what made their eyes light up with laughter, as, to me, that's always the key: if they laugh, they win! It means they usually learn something of value.

But more than that, I take with me, those lovely, concerned brown eyes looking into mine at the end of the practicum and asking me, "How did it go, Cary?" Such overwhelming kindness took my breath away.

My promise to each of them in return, will be not once, not ever, to take a learner for granted; to smile as graciously as each one of them did at the beginning and at the end of each class in greeting and in farewell wishes, and to always, always remember to turn inwards and ask, just as those lovely brown eyes did, "How did it go, Cary?"



a corner of a larger Korean shopping mall, no English lettering in sight. The irony didn't escape me. The balance has shifted indeed, to many unofficial languages, and yet, the language of yearning, if not learning, that new Canadians still seek out, and clearly acknowledged to me in the ESL classes that I taught in, is English. They want to learn it, and realize they need to learn it if they are to move

was no interaction, even when I attempted it. I understood the distrust in that situation. I guess I still expected some of it here, and when I didn't run into it, I was surprised. I saw and was greeted with only complete pride in their new country, determination to make it here, and certitude that they will, because they already love and believe in the opportunities afforded them in their short time

**Biography: Cary Gilmore:**

An Hon. B.A. in Drama and English led me on a circuitous route to BC: I first became a radio producer for the CBC for 15 years. Then, I wandered through a few of the States, and devised a sneaky way of being near my two school aged boys: I became a certified substitute teacher and loved it! Then I put that Drama degree to good use, and wrote a bunch of children's plays, directed them in the schools and voila, they hired me as a contract director/ theatre teacher . I returned to Canada with one of my sons, now grown. He moved in with a girlfriend, while I moved in with my sister, but with the real Gilmore girls under one roof, it became apparent that one of us better stop sitting around twiddling our thumbs. With a yen to continue teaching I discovered the TESL program at Douglas College just in time, and now here I am a freshly minted TESL teacher, all brand new and shiny, and ready to teach some eager ELLS! Bravo, Douglas TESL Certification program!

**Winner****ESL Student****Category 2: Benchmark Level 3-4****Meliaty Oey**

**School:** *Vernon District Immigrant Services and Society (VDISS)*

**'A New Page in My Life'**

It was such a sunny day, but that didn't cheer me up. I was in Soekarno-Hatta International Airport Jakarta, leaving Indonesia for Canada. I was anxious about my future in Canada. I had left a good job as an Electone Music teacher at Yamaha Music Schools, and had to choose between staying in Jakarta or going to Canada with my family. I thought Canada would be much better for our future, especially for my daughter.

I found Vernon District Immigrant Services (VDISS) where I took ELSA (English Language Services for Adults) and computer workshops. They're really good and friendly people and so helpful.

After 2 years, I got a job at a grocery store in the bakery Department which I liked, especially decorating cakes, that's my specialty. Some of my problems were talking on the phone with customers when I had to take orders or answer questions. One day, I had a bad experience. A customer called to order a birthday cake, I didn't understand him because he had a very strong accent. I asked him to repeat but unfortunately I still couldn't understand. Suddenly he got angry, and yelled at me, asking to talk to somebody with English as a first language. I was shocked and upset and called the Manager who was English speaking. He took a long while to understand what the customer wanted!

I was making a birthday cake when my co-worker asked me to take over his conversation on the phone because he didn't understand what the lady was saying. I said, "How can I understand if you don't?" Anyway, I answered the phone and finally found that I was talking to a Chinese lady who had a strong accent. I listened carefully and eventually I understood her accent perfectly, I even found that we had the same last name.

Many funny things happened at work because people didn't understand my pronunciation or I used the wrong preposition. I thought the Manager was lying to me, and I said "Don't lie on me", suddenly everybody started laughing and he said "I'm not lying on you." I heard people say "cheat on", so why not "lie on"? Fortunately, most of my customers and friends were good and understood that I was an immigrant. Because I worked, I was no longer in ELSA Class. VDISS offered me another program, the Tutorial Program, where all of the tutors are volunteers. Here I meet my Tutor once a week for 2 hours, and I'm helped with problems in English that I have at work. My Tutor is a British woman who was a Veterinarian. She is very knowledgeable with plenty of ideas. She suggested that I ask the Vernon Community Arts Center, if I could teach Keyboard Music in their facilities and eventually they gave me a space. I've been teaching there since fall '09, just a couple of students, but it's a good start to teach music in English. That's a new subject for me!

**Biography: Meliaty Oey**

I'm a Chinese descend, was born in Middle Java and grew up in Metropolitan City, Jakarta, Indonesia. I came to Canada in 2003 with my husband and the only daughter. I took ELSA at VDISS in 2004, and I got a job at Save On Foods in the bakery Dept in 2006, that's why I was offered to take Tutoring Program, once a week for 2 hours. That's really helpful. Now I've been teaching music at Vernon Community Arts Centre (VCAC) since Fall '09. That's my goal, I was a Yamaha Music teacher in Jakarta, Indonesia and I had taught music for 22 years. I'm very happy to teach music again here, but this time with a big challenge, because I have to teach music in English.

**Winner****ESL Student****Category 3: Benchmark Level 5-6**

Yuri Goshima

School: *ICA Victoria***'The Long Way to Success'**

It has been more than 2 years since I came to Canada, and it has been over 6 months since I started to study ESL here in Victoria. I was so excited and hopeful before I came here, but my hopeful dreams in Japan were not the reality I faced when I arrived in Vancouver. I soon felt depressed and isolated when I started my new dream life in Canada. One reason was that I did not have any friends here at all; but, really my biggest problem was language. You see, I studied English for over six years in Japan. I worked hard at learning English and eventually



I was an 'advanced' student in Japan. Something I was very proud of; but, it was not long until I found that being advanced in conversational English in Tokyo is quite different from having a conversation in Victoria. People in Canada speak English so much more quickly and they usually form their sentences differently than I was accustomed to. I felt very uncomfortable when I went to the supermarket, for example,

the cashier spoke to me, even an easy conversation like 'Oh these strawberries look fresh'. I would feel so panicked and just say things like, "yes" and "thank you". This was all I could think to say and honestly I didn't really understand what people said half of the time. So I decided to study English at ESL class. There are ESL students from many countries in Victoria and depending on the country they come from some students have strong or strange and different accents than I am accustomed to hearing in Japan. At first, I had trouble understanding what my classmates said most of the time. I tried to understand and listen but still could not understand most of it. I was so frustrated but I did not give up; I knew I could not. Now, I can understand and communicate with classmates and I learn so much from them.

Recently I had the chance to give a speech at a conference in Vancouver, it was about immigrants in Canada and multi-culturalism and I did it all in English. I knew it would not be easy when I accepted this, but I thought I should challenge myself. To tell the truth, I was quite worried about my English pronunciation and enunciation, my sentence structure, and my grammar, but once I was standing in front of all the people it seemed to me like everybody understood my speech. It was a very important experience for me and I will never forget it. Studying English has not been easy, at times it has been stressful; but looking back, it has also been so much fun and I feel it has helped me to grow and to learn more about Canada, the world, and about myself.

**Biography: Yuri Goshima**

I was born in Toyama, Japan. I came to Canada in March of 2008 and settled in Victoria, BC with my family. I have

attended ESL classes at ICA here in Victoria since January, 2010.

**Winner****ESL Student****Category 4: Benchmark 7-8**

Ikuko Meguriya

School: *Camosun College***'The Colourful Scenery in My Life'**

Studying English at Camosun College was a big turning point in my life. When I started studying, I couldn't imagine what it would bring to me. Now that I have finished my English studies, I can clearly recognize what I have gained from the study: interesting insight about life.

I immigrated to Canada because I married a Canadian. He was a wonderful person who inspired me in many ways. However, he became critically ill and unfortunately passed away in September 2008. I had absolutely no idea what to do about my future for almost one year. However, I gradually decided to go back to school because I realized that if I wanted to get a secure job and make a living on my own in Canada, I needed to acquire a suitable education. That was the most difficult time in my life. Therefore, it was extremely challenging to begin studying at the college especially because my ability to concentrate on reading had significantly decreased due to the shock of my husband's death.

After I started studying, I struggled mentally. I found that I had a tendency to withhold my emotions. Following my counsellor's advice, I decided to open myself up to the people around me by sharing my feelings. My studies at the college were the best place to explore my emotions and thoughts. I started not only writing

about my feelings at the time, but also insights and thoughts about many aspects of life. I realize that when I write something sincere, it conveys a meaningful message to readers. For writing assignments, the main readers were my teachers. I appreciate how they gave me encouraging feedback about my writing. As a result, I began to feel more confident and even thought that I had discovered some talent in writing. Furthermore, I enjoyed reading the literature and articles in class and learned many interesting insights about life.

I especially remember one article; it was about education. The writer stated that there are two types of education: sausages and oysters. In sausage-style education, students cram academic facts into their brains. However, they don't know how to use them. On the other hand, oyster-style education provides opportunities to find the pearls inside yourself, to

cultivate insights and to apply what you learn to your own life.

Apparently, I was immersed in oyster-style education at the college. While cultivating my education, I finally began to realize that I don't feel so stressed when writing and reading English anymore. Because I focused on what I enjoyed learning, positive results followed. By taking a first big step of studying, I have made a remarkable achievement and received insights that will remain with me for life.



Unfamiliar paths always seem difficult to step into at first. However, I learned that the most important thing is actually starting to walk on the path. Once you start, you will notice the colourful scenery in your life which you haven't noticed before. I am very grateful for what I gained from the studies!

### **Biography: Ikuko Meguriya**

As you read my essay, you will know what happened to me after I immigrated to Canada from Japan 8 years ago. It has been a tough time, but I am glad to have started my new life with studying at Camosun College. The experience and study totally changed my view about my life! I would like to help people as I was helped while I was in the most difficult time. I will take University Transfer course in Camosun so that I can study social work at a university in future.

## Interior Conference Proceedings Moving Forward

*By Joe Dobson*



In October 2009, Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops hosted the BC TEAL Fall 2009 Interior Conference. As a pilot initiative for BC TEAL, it was decided to publish conference proceedings - a first for BC TEAL. The proceedings were thought of as a way for the Association to offer a publishing venue for those new and more experienced ESL teaching practitioners to publish a peer-reviewed article. The proceedings will be edited by myself and Michael Galli and are meant to be inclusive of research and practice-based articles. As a gateway for those newer to publishing, the Proceedings provide an opportunity to work in a supportive and collegial environment. For BC TEAL, this pilot

project provides a valuable template for future Proceedings. With reviewer guidelines and other lessons learned from the process, the doors are now open for BC TEAL to consider adding the publication of proceedings to future events. Dissemination of articles and other publications is increasingly digital and as such, the Proceedings will be published online on the BC TEAL website, and in future may be linked and included in a relevant article database. Keep your eyes peeled on the Association's website for this publication.

<http://www.bctéal.org/>



The key to this definition of ZPD is that while students are engaged in an active blogging community, they are being exposed to new language from their peers, and in turn, they are exposing new language to their peers. They are learning from each other in a subtle collaboration that is based on authentic written communication as new vocabulary and grammatical structures are reproduced throughout the learning community.

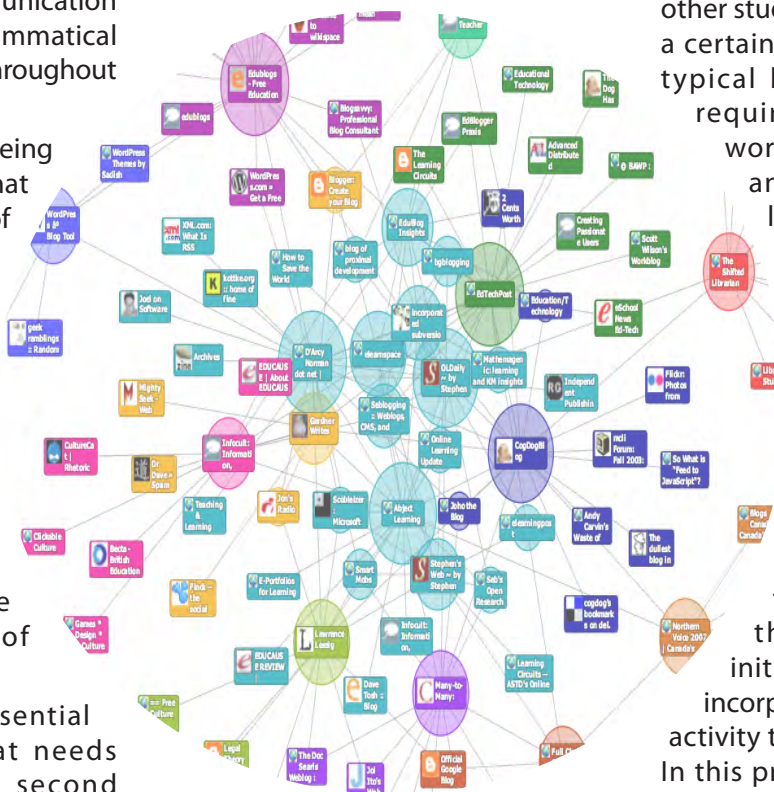
Vygotsky sees students as being able to imitate functions that go well beyond the limits of their evident capabilities, and these imitation and collective activities of blogging lead to greater developmental levels. Students are able to copy the grammatical structures and vocabulary they see in the blogs of their peers. This engages the ZPD and students move towards higher levels of language acquisition.

Vygotsky's ZPD is an essential feature of learning that needs to be exploited in the second language classroom, and it only works if students are interacting with each other and collaborating with their peers. Blogs create the ideal environment for interacting with people and cooperating with a peer group. This is especially true for large classes or classes that meet infrequently making it difficult for all students to work together during class time.

Finally, it is important to reiterate that, for Vygotsky, learning is a social process and students grow into the intellectual life around them, with dialogue, collaboration, and language playing vital roles in cognitive growth. Blogs are vibrant places for students to socialize and improve their language

as they grow through the sharing of their own personal stories and ideas.

Reference: Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts.



### Starting a Blogging Project with Your Class

Blogging can become a regular component of a language classroom. There are several free blogging websites online, such as WordPress ([wordpress.com](http://wordpress.com)), Blogger ([blogger.com](http://blogger.com)), or LiveJournal ([livejournal.com](http://livejournal.com)). Many institutions also have their own blogging environments, such as the one at the University of Calgary ([ucalgaryblogs.ca](http://ucalgaryblogs.ca)). Once a teacher's blog has been created using one of these providers, students can create their blogs as well, and their links can be posted onto the teacher's blog, enabling students to easily find each other.

### Writing Fluency Projects

There is potential for various types of blogging projects. One type stresses extensive writing practice and engagement. In this type of project, students are assigned a certain number of blog posts per week, and they are required to read other students' blogs as well, making a certain number of comments. A typical blogging project might require students to blog 200 words per week, and to read and make comments on at least two other students' blogs each week. For this type of project, it is important to stress that it is a writing fluency activity, and students shouldn't worry too much about grammar, spelling, or vocabulary. The key is to write freely and often on open topics that the students choose themselves. Part of the initial set-up of the blogs can incorporate a topic brainstorming activity to get the students started. In this project, the teacher should also blog regularly along with the students, and make comments on each student's blog. Blogs can be evaluated based on participation and the number of words posted. Examples of these kinds of projects can be seen at:

[www.englishforacademicpurposes.blogspot.com](http://www.englishforacademicpurposes.blogspot.com)

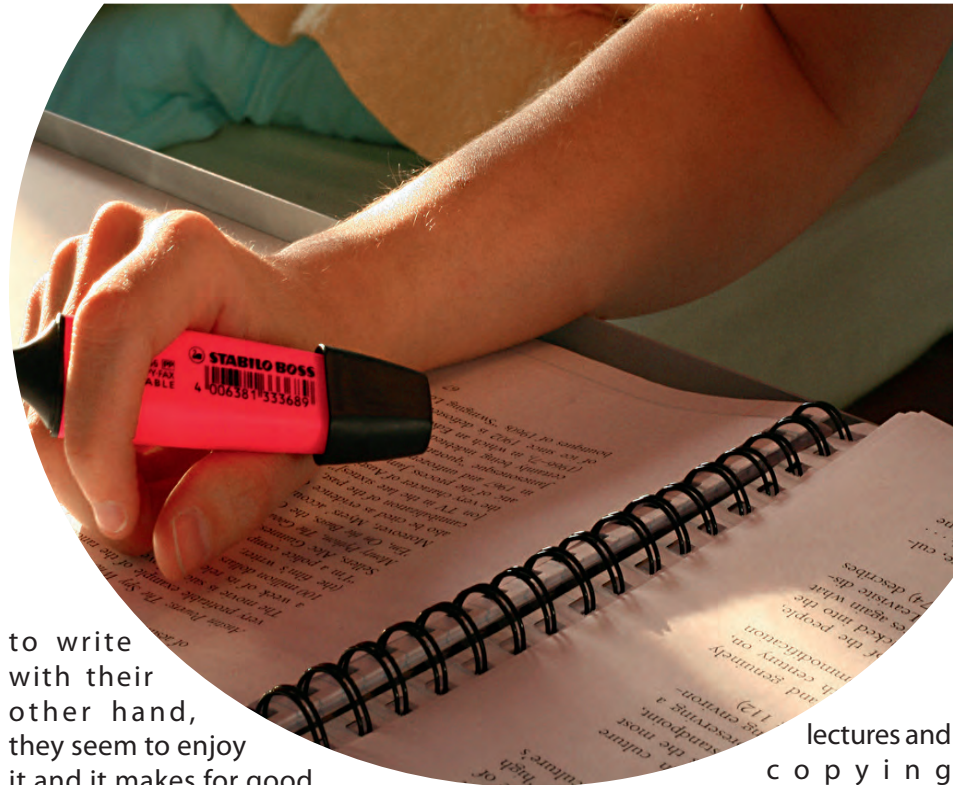
## Two Solutions for Idle Students

Every teacher has had to grapple with the problem of idle students at some point. These are the students that blaze through their work in half of the time expected, and follow by shooting their hand up while shouting, "Teacher! Oh teacher! I'm finished!" In the past, my solution was to stockpile extra worksheets to deal out to speedy students. However, I felt guilty because these worksheets could be seen as a punishment for students who finished their work early. Worksheets are usually boring and wasteful.

With time and practice, I have discovered a couple of time-filler activities for swift students that involve no preparation, are always related to the learning task, are paperless and, most importantly, are enjoyable.

### On The Other Hand

Slow speedy literacy students down by asking them to copy with their other hand. I credit this tip to my manager, and it works like a charm. I found, in my practice, that although some literacy and low-beginner students have the motor skills to copy simple words or sentences fast, it does not mean in any way that they fully understand the material. By asking speedy students to write with their other hand, they are forced to slow down and critically analyze the shape of words and recognize patterns in discourses. Research in typography and psycholinguistics suggests that people read words not as individual letters, but as shapes. Word shape recognition is essential for developing literacy skills. Not only is this tip a useful tool, it is fun for students. In my experience, whenever I ask students



to write with their other hand, they seem to enjoy it and it makes for good laughter in the classroom.

### Student Teachers

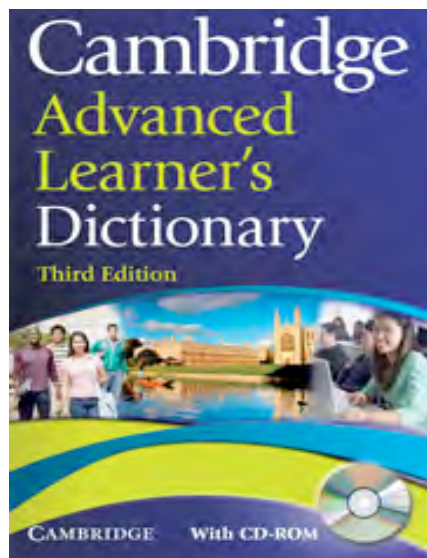
The following suggestion seems to work well in intermediate or advanced classes. To avoid having higher-level or speedy students sit idle, ask them to tutor the lower-level or slower students during activities. This tip involves very little preparation on behalf of the teacher while maximizing learning time. Asking higher-level students to tutor lower-level students is beneficial for both learners. For the higher-level student, tutoring may give them a sense of purpose and leadership in the classroom. More importantly, this suggestion moves learning from a passive activity of receiving and responding to material, to an active endeavour of organizing and characterizing material. It is widely accepted in the field of education that passive learning activities (such as listening to

lectures and copying information) is much less effective than active learning activities (such as critical dialogue and teaching). In addition, asking students to tutor each other encourages communication and develops listening and speaking skills. Furthermore, tutoring creates a sense of community in the classroom. However, I should warn that, before asking a higher-level student to tutor, ensure that the student understands the material!

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# Book Review: The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary

by Marti Sevier



## **The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary with CD-ROM, 3rd Edition**

Publisher's suggested price: \$35.00 CDN

Alan Kirkness (2004), in his review of Three Advanced Learners' Dictionaries, observes that the task of reviewing dictionaries of any kind is "a fraught exercise" (294), largely because of the complexity of dictionaries themselves and the relatively narrow scope of a review article. The main purpose of his review is to enable English language teachers to decide whether to buy updated versions of three learner's dictionaries, the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE), the Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary (both reviewed in this newsletter) and the Collins COBUILD Advanced Learner's English Dictionary (forthcoming). He examines each in terms of its general presentation, macrostructure, microstructure and "additional matters" such as illustrations, information on phrasal verbs, etc. While this is a useful range of information, I note that he

makes no reference to the added enticements of the CDs or DVDs, without which no self-respecting publisher's rep can exhibit at a book fair these days. This review will take a somewhat different approach, but before I begin I would like to make a case for teaching dictionary skills, even to advanced learners.

### **Why dictionary use needs to be explicitly taught**

The main reason dictionary skills need to be taught is that many international students are unfamiliar with a) the information that dictionaries can provide and b) how to make appropriate decisions when using dictionaries. Nesi and Haill (2002) refer to the problem of "lookup failure" (282) among international university students in the U.K, describing how, in an out of class assignment, over a third of the 89 students in their study were unable to select the correct dictionary entry or sub-entry of the word they were looking up. Yet in many EAL classrooms, dictionary use is seen as a second-best option to working out the meaning of words from context (Neubach and Cohen, cited in Wingate, 2004). While it can be argued that the use of dictionaries can be a distraction while reading (and here is a strong argument for the use of electronic dictionaries: they are at least quick to use), it is equally true that the use of contextual clues to determine the meaning of unknown vocabulary is as fraught an activity as writing reviews of dictionaries (for a detailed discussion of the problems involved, see Kaivanpanah and Alavi, 2008). In fact, the use of dictionaries is not a single skill but many, including familiarity with how dictionaries are organized, knowledge of word categories and syntax, both of which lend themselves to the analytical skill required to select meanings appropriate to the learner's needs. Not until they have become good dictionary users will students be able to derive any benefit from them. So let us look at this particular dictionary.

This examination of CALD will look first at general background information on the dictionary, i.e. that related to corpora used, numbers of headwords, etc. and then move into information contained in the entries themselves. From here I will describe additional features such as "Common Mistakes" and other help for learners. Never one to shirk from making a short review long, I will then examine the CD-ROM accompanying the dictionary and hopefully come to a conclusion as to its value to students and to the instructor wily enough to coerce students into using a monolingual print dictionary.

### **Background information**

Like most learner dictionaries produced these days, CALD is corpus-based, with a few tweaks. It uses both the Cambridge International Corpus, comprised of over a billion words from spoken and written sources, and the Cambridge Learner Corpus.

The words from the CIC (strangely, the number of headwords is not given, though an electronic version of the dictionary claims to have 170,000) were analyzed in order to compile a lexicon of "useful" words for learners. (Walter, 2008). How useful? No need to worry: the words are categorized into 3 areas: Essential (marked "E" in the entries), which are either extremely frequent or used to express basic concepts, Improver ("I"), which are less common but still

viewed as important, and Advanced ("A"), for learners wishing to stretch their vocabulary knowledge. No mention is made of the Academic word list in the introduction to the dictionary, perhaps because it is already featured in a competing publication. The Cambridge Learner Corpus, containing 25 million words produced by learners, is there for its errors. These are utilized in "Common Mistakes", one of several sections designed to give learners extra information about English and English language skills, which will be described in Additional Features.

A section entitled "How to use the dictionary" goes through basic skills and definitions and shows how information about a word is organized in the entries. It is written in fairly simple language and begins with reference to frequently-used terms in the dictionary, such as headwords, idioms, phrasal verbs, etc. Not all the language in this section will be familiar to the student; while the authors are careful to replace the word "italics" with "small, sloping capitals" (Walter, 2008, XII), they fail to do the same with terms such as "inflection" or "sense number" (I had to look this one up: it means the numbered definitions and examples given for a word (Riggs, 1989).)

### Looking at an entry

So how is entry information organized? In the print version of the dictionary, headwords are given in bold black type unless they are deemed important; such words are printed in blue. Guidewords, which accompany lengthy definitions, help the user by giving context, e.g. "know" is listed with 11 different meanings and followed by approximately 30 idioms using the word and then 2 phrasal verbs, so

the guidewords given, "have information" and "be familiar with" (Walter, 2008, 795) are helpful, as is the distinction given in a neighboring entry, "knotty": "complicated" and "wood". However, while "knotty" and "complicated" are of the same word class, this is not the case with "knotty" and "wood". Such discrepancies could be confusing for students who tend simply to substitute one word for another in paraphrasing, as Nesi and Haill describe (2004) and as many instructors have experienced. Many sense numbers are headed with the "E", "I", and "A", described earlier, though I don't necessarily agree with the editors' categorizations of words. There is also potential confusion for the student user who needs to be familiar with two systems for determining the importance of a word: color and categories. The usual distinctions between US and UK usage are given, along with IPA guidelines on pronunciation. The IPA itself is on the last page of the dictionary.

As in most dictionaries, each word or phrase is labeled with a word class. In CALD this is written out rather than abbreviated: "noun" instead of "n.", etc. In addition, verbs are labeled either "continuous" or "not continuous". This could be helpful for students unfamiliar with dictionaries and their abbreviations. However, "C" and "U" and "T" and "I", are given in this abbreviated form. Major words and phrases are supplemented with sentence examples, and small blue boxes show common mistakes, for example with "know", shown here.

Common mistake: know
<p>Warning: choose the correct verb!</p> <p>To talk about spending time with someone or something so that you learn more about them, don't say 'know', say get to know :</p> <p>They organized a party so we could know other students.</p> <p>They organized a party so we could get to know the other students.</p> <p>To talk about learning a fact or piece of information for the first time, don't say 'know', say find out :</p> <p>I was shocked when I knew that I was pregnant.</p> <p>I was shocked when I found out I was pregnant.</p>

Walter, 2008, 796.

Additional features among the entries are "word partners", or collocations, for many of the words, such as knowledge. None of the collocations are explained, however. A thesaurus, called "Other ways of saying..." can supposedly expand a learner's vocabulary by providing interesting synonyms for common words. However this feature also gives common synonyms of interesting words. "Other ways of saying "improve" given include "get better", which isn't very interesting, but also the less often used "rally" and "recover", with examples, along with phrasal verbs "pick up" and "look up", again with examples. Then there is "come on in leaps and bounds", which is perhaps a bit too interesting for my students (Walter, 724).

I don't pay much attention to graphics in dictionaries, partly because they are so dull. CALD does not exceed expectations. The pictures themselves seem to date from different eras and different value systems. A central section contains colored illustrations of basic concepts and categories, e.g. kitchens show cupboards, taps, dishwashers and washing machines (it is definitely a British kitchen). On another page, under food, different types of cakes are

shown. The text then advises that “the basic tastes of food are: bitter, salty, sour, sweet and umami” (Walter, 2008, P5). (Umami? Located between “um” and “umbrella” (in blue) it is defined as “a strong savoury taste that people recognize in foods such a cheese or mushrooms: Vegetables develop umami as they ripen”(Ibid., 1577). Well, now I know. But do students need this term?)



Some of the illustrations are obviously painted, like banana or a rather excremental yam, while others of human figures are computer generated and still others are photographs. Among the entries themselves, there are line drawings from different eras, including one of a “nightcap” on the head of a sleeping child, which, I would argue, is a far less common usage than “nightcap as drink”.

A black and white photograph (shown in color on the CD-ROM) of an hourglass seems similarly pointless, as neither of these items, to me at least, represent the cultural or historical richness of the language.



I quite liked the illustration of the gorilla, which appears to be trying to leave its page and was bemused by a drawing representing graffiti (not shown here) which depicted a brick wall with “no road” written on it. No illustrations, alas, for Guy Fawkes night, but I did spy a guillotine. Go figure. The choices of illustrations seem to reflect

availability rather than anything else.

To sum up, the entries seem to be a mixture of useful and less useful information with sometimes rather arbitrarily placed illustrations. While the basics of pronunciation, word class and definitions are provided, some of the decisions made when it comes to abbreviations or word choices seem less well thought out than I would like.

### Additional features

These are mostly contained in the back of the dictionary and include the aforementioned explanation of IPA symbols as well as information sheets on a range of topics including “Let’s Talk”, to show typical conversational gambits used at work and among friends. Again, I question how typical some of the gambits are. Perhaps it is just US vs UK, but I don’t think I would teach my EAP students to express disagreement by saying, “I don’t know. I tend to think that the opposite is true” (Walter, 2008, EH3). It seems far too formal, at least in the North American context. Some of the “among friends” gambits seem similarly stilted. For example, “Joining two parts of a conversation” is illustrated by “He takes really good photos. While we’re on the subject, did you get the photos I sent you last week?” (Ibid., EH8). Other information sheets focus (but briefly) on letter and essay writing. I failed to see how these would work either as classroom or as self-study materials so I just moved on.

New words and phrases are topical inclusions, reflecting concerns with the environment, technology, food, diet and health, business, and others. Definitions, but no information on pronunciation, are given, so the reader must leaf back and forth from the back of the book to the entries. This

section is followed by information on writing: both letters and essays are covered. Next are sections on names, geographical and popular first names, and then information about the language, word affixes, verb tenses and word families, though not in that order. I was quite interested in the “Idiom Finder”, which lists the idioms alphabetically, not according to the first word of the idiom, but under its key words so that “hear wedding bells” is listed three times, under B, H and W (Walter, 2008). Each time the idiom is listed, it is accompanied by a page number so that learners can go back and check the definition. While some students are keen to collect and use idioms, I did think that many of the phrases listed in this section could equally be labeled as “clichés”. How is a student to choose between phrases that would be acceptable in writing or conversation and those which would label her writing as trite or hackneyed? I checked “One man’s loss is another man’s gain” since this is an expression I rarely hear and never use because I consider it to be a cliché. It is categorized as a saying that informs the reader that it is “said when someone gets an advantage from someone else’s bad luck” (Ibid., 849). Perhaps we could just advise students to avoid sayings? It seems to me that CALD purports to advise students on which words to use and which to avoid, but then steps back: it warns a learner that the use of “man”, used as a verb meaning “be present to operate” can be viewed as sexist (Ibid., 869), but gives no warnings about trite or hackneyed usage. Even worse, it dispenses neologisms such as “man boobs” with no warning at all, merely informing the reader that this is an informal term.

## The CD- ROM

The CD-ROM does everything the dictionary does, with hyperlinks, and a bit more. What it does not do is provide an easy-to-find guide to its use on the CD-ROM itself, which seems a bit negligent, since the print guide is a small booklet that will easily be misplaced. (Note: I did eventually locate a guide under the Help tab.) Looking up a word is quite straightforward, requiring the user only to type the word in the box in the upper left. If the word is misspelled, a number of possible words appear, which should help the user to identify the term s/he is looking for.

I typed in "seims" for "seems" and the list on the left dropped down; this would at least narrow my search. Channelling my inner ESL student, I wasn't sure which term I wanted, so I clicked on "semi" and got the information shown below.

Figure 1, list of possible words for misspelled "seims"

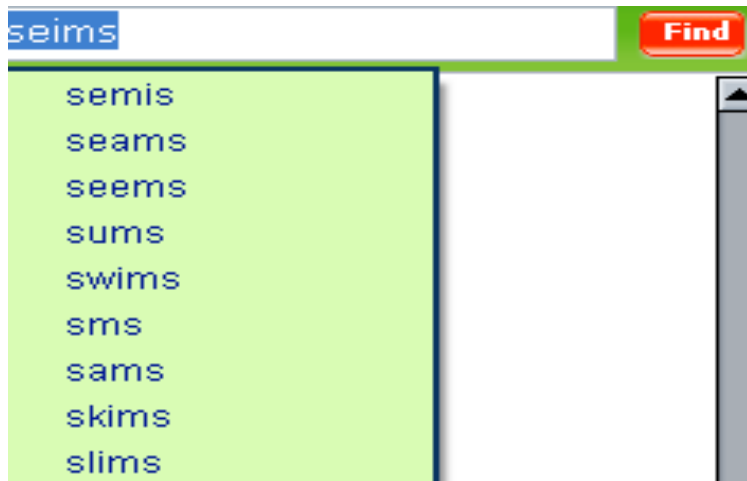
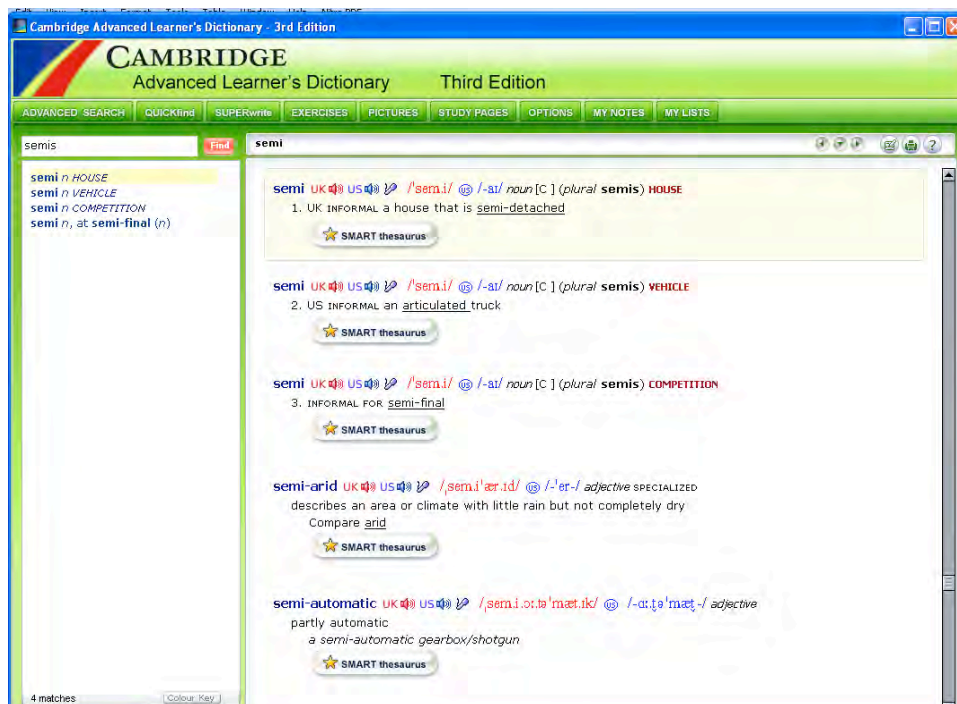


Figure 2, "semi"



However, once I rejected “semi”, I was unable to return to my drop-down list. The arrow keys will move the user back to the previously viewed word but not the misspelled one.

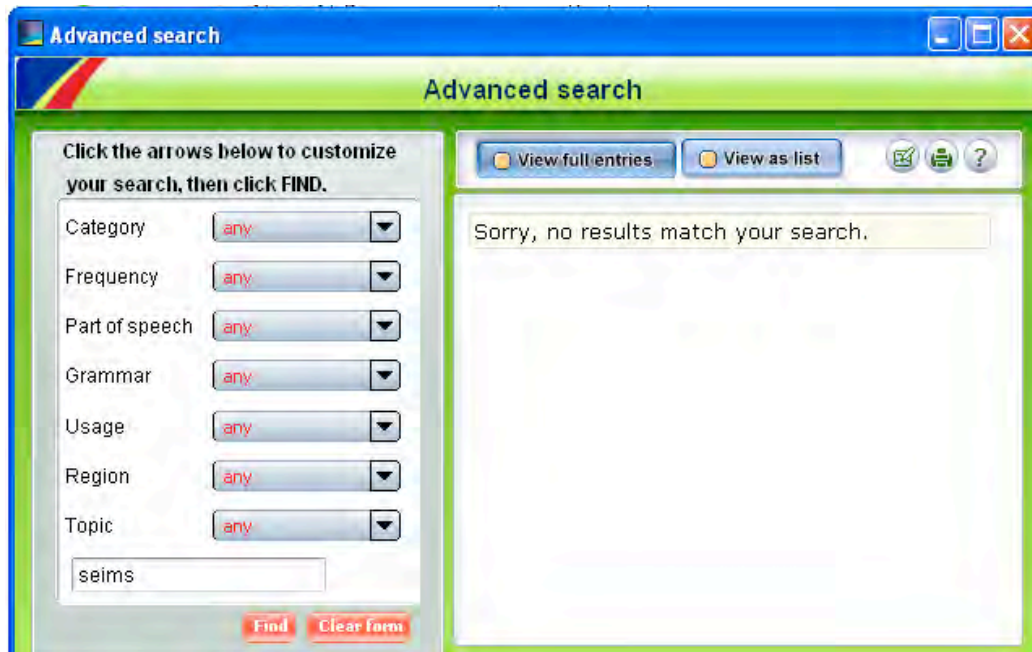
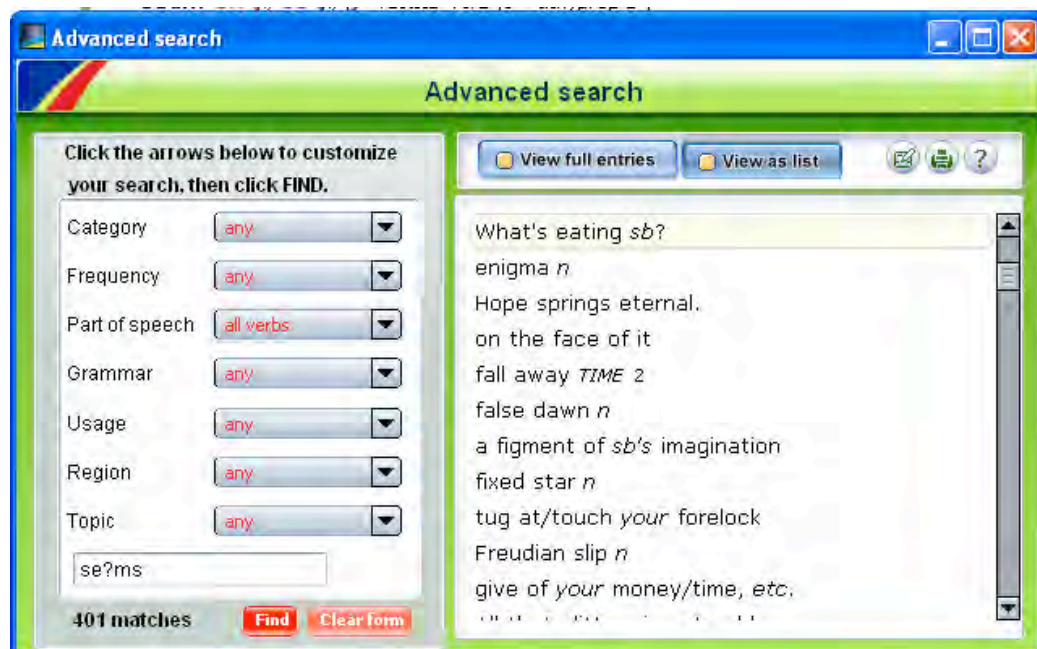


Figure 3, the Advanced Search

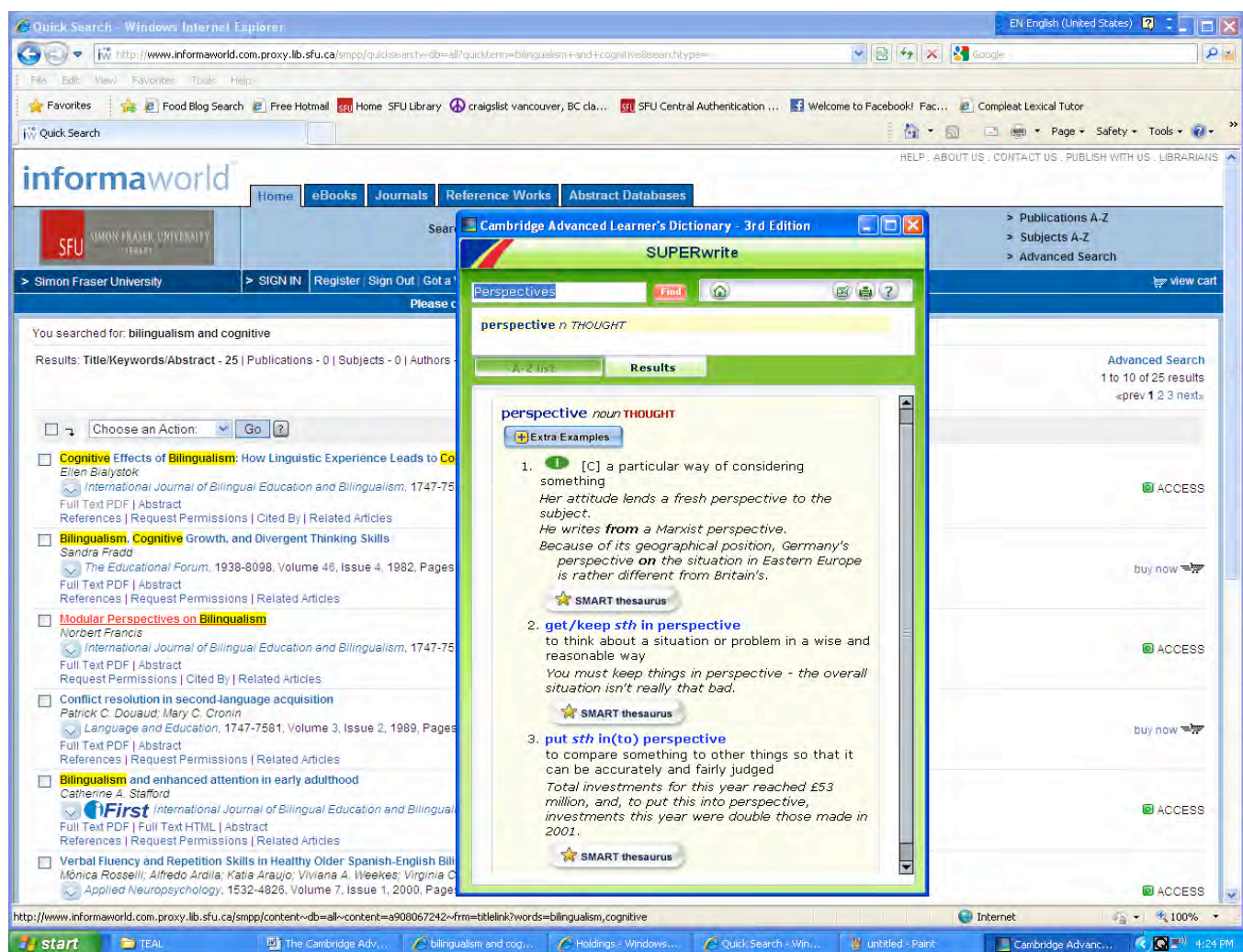
Perhaps what my student needed was the Advanced Search, as in Figure 3. Alas, this function does not recognize misspellings. However, it does tolerate Wild Card searches (Figure 3a), so once you explain that to your students, they should be fine: either a question mark (?) for a missing letter or an asterisk (\*) for an unknown part of a word can help.



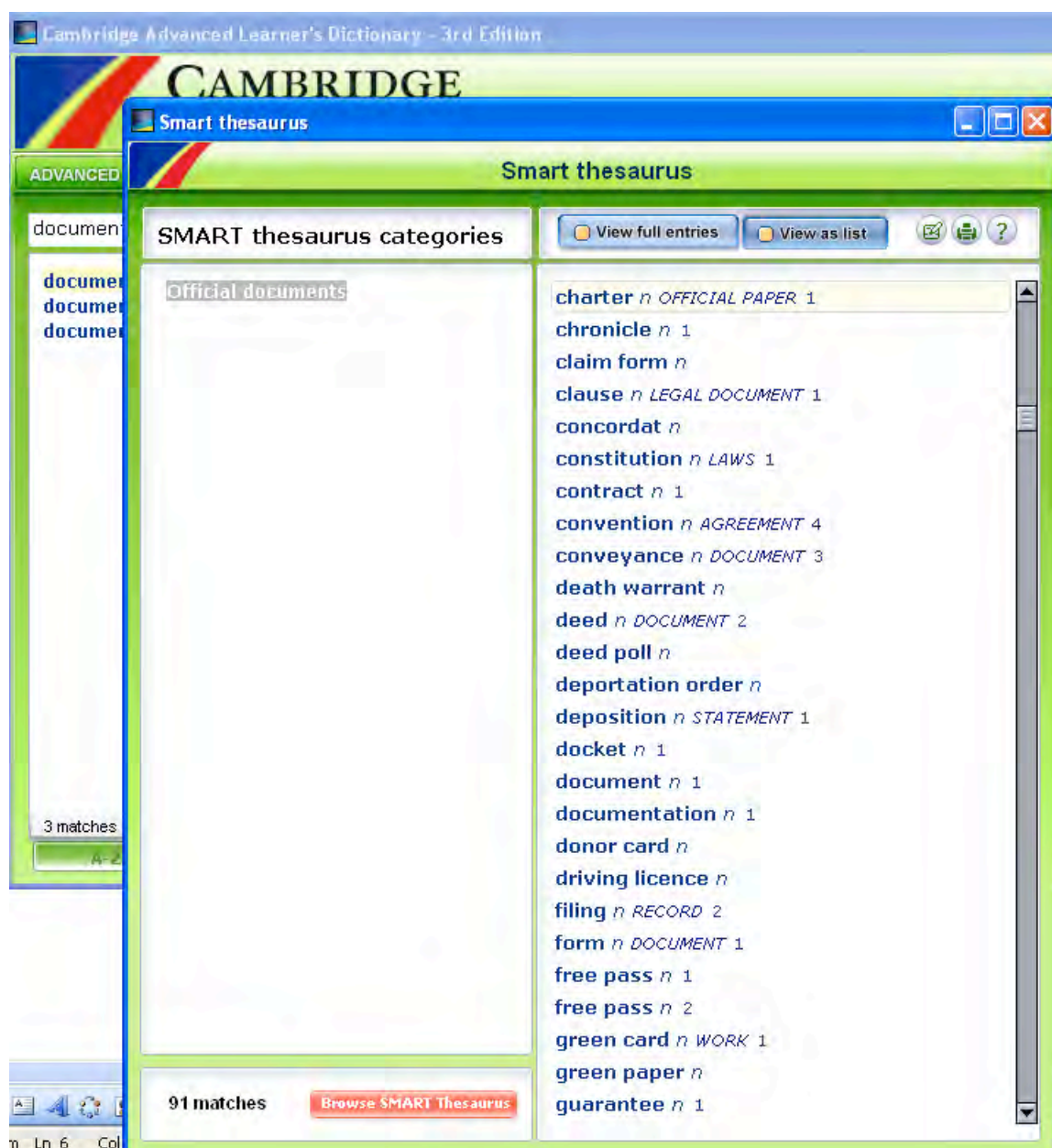
**Figure 3a, the use of wildcards in Advanced Search**

Less helpful are the categories given, and I was not clear initially as to what “view full entries” and “view as list” referred to. When I typed in se\*ms, listing the part of speech as a verb (my inner learner would not be able to navigate the usage or category arrows, to name two), the dictionary yielded only “seems” and “self-harm” but not “seams”, which is surely another possible word, though not a headword.

“Quickfind” allows the user to find definitions of all words in a documents/he is working on, simply by running the cursor over a word. This is a genuinely useful feature, along with “Superwrite®” which has the same function when reading (only html or documents: it does not work with pdf files) or writing. It gives information on word family members (Word Building), additional examples of the word’s usage as well as access to SMART thesaurus®. (See Figure 4.) However I am not certain how smart this Thesaurus is, as it gives, as most thesauri do, too many choices with too little information. (See Figure 5.) For “document” I got 91 “matches”, which were not matches at all, but examples of different types of document. A scroll down the list did not even include “papers” which could be construed as a synonym, only “paper trail”, though “form” is listed. Unfortunately, too, the cursor can only select single, not compound words such as “green paper”, which is not entirely transparent in meaning.



**Figure 4, using SuperWrite**



**Figure 5, SMART thesaurus**

The CD-ROM also contains a number of other features. There is a good variety of exercises in the areas of grammar, vocabulary, pictures and exam practice. I focused on the IELTS exam practice in reading (no other skill is covered) and found that a good range of question types was covered, but that they were from older exams. In the other exercises, most were multiple choice format with drop down menus, though there was plenty of variety: by clicking on the "More" button, users could continue to work in their chosen areas. The Study Pages are printable (indeed most of the material on the CD-ROM can be printed out) reference sheets on topics that are covered in the exercises, e.g. homophones, phrasal verbs, regular inflections (where a student can finally get a definition and examples of that troublesome term), and so on. These might well find themselves in a student's binder for impromptu study but since they are not in any way contextualized, I would use them only as supplementary materials. "My notes"<sup>®</sup> and "My lists"<sup>®</sup> are other features of the CD-ROM that enable users to personalize the materials from the dictionary. The first is used with entries and might include personal observations about a word or MT translations, as can be seen in Figure 6:

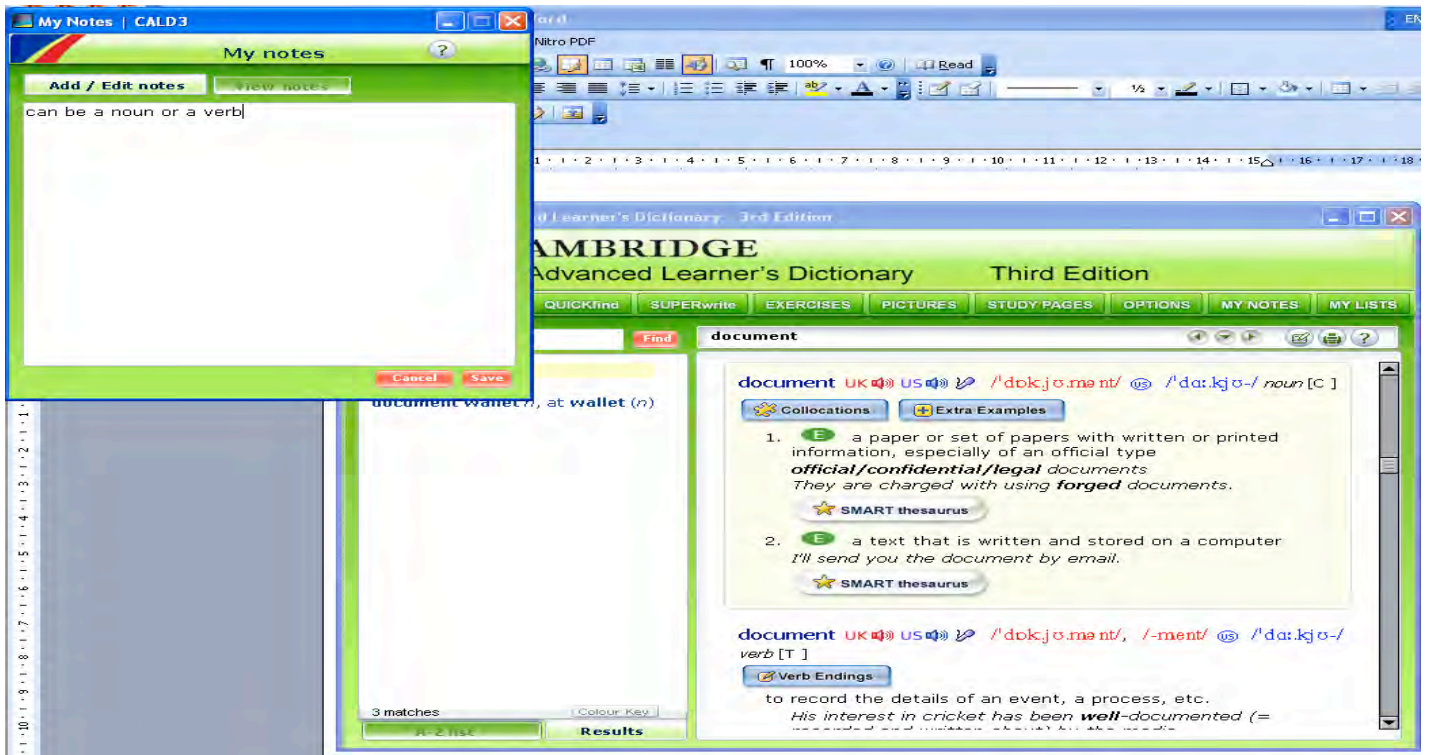


Figure 6, My notes

My lists®, on the other hand, give the user a means of saving groups of words, for example, that can be categorized under a heading, as in Figure 7, below



### Figure 7, My lists

Any questions? The Help Centre, under the “?” tab is informative and easy to navigate. For the most part it is written in manageable language, too.

### Conclusion

Would I recommend this dictionary? I don't think it would be my first choice. I found the print dictionary was interesting and well laid out, but the additional features did not impress me much. The CD-ROM was lackluster, both in appearance and functionality. The Smart Thesaurus® was less smart than information overloaded. While the listing and notes features were useful, there are few other dictionaries that don't have them or something similar. I would also like to see more of a web presence for this dictionary. Although CALD users can access more information about words and language online at <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/> (the introduction to the dictionary provides this url for those wishing to subscribe to Cambridge Dictionaries Online Extra but I wasn't able to find it from the url given above). The Cambridge Dictionaries do give a lot of information away but the lack of systematicity and consistency in CALD is also reflected on the site. However, I can follow them on Twitter or become a Facebook Fan if I wish.

Maybe not this time.

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# 1 Topic, 3 Takes

In this installment of 1 Topic, 3 Takes, we consider the importance of collaboration within the language learning and teaching field, while also discussing some of its ups and downs. "George" is an educator who has taught EFL and ESL/EAP, and is involved in teacher education at the undergraduate and graduate levels. "Lelan McKay" is currently an English (EAP) instructor at a private college, but has also worked in community ESL programs and spent time overseas. "Tammy Teamplayer" has worked in EAL as both a teacher and an administrator in Vancouver and overseas. She loves a collegial atmosphere, but has been known to be a bit bossy and opinionated from time to time.

**The topic for the upcoming Newsletter is "Collaboration in TESOL," and the questions for discussion are as follows:**

**How do you define the term collaboration?**

**G:** Collaboration is when people work together to create something that represents more than what any one of them could do on his or her own. It involves negotiation, and the resulting "product," tangible or intangible, develops in the interaction between participants. Whereas, collaboration might be described as a case where each person goes to their own corner, does their own part, and then returns to the group to compile individual parts.

**LM:** I think collaboration means bringing together the knowledge, experience and skills of all people involved in the process of learning in order to contribute to the development of new knowledge.

Those involved in the learning process are not just interacting but constructing knowledge together.

**TT:** In simple terms, I think of collaboration as "working together". But when I think further on it, it's not merely working together - we could all sit at the same table and work simultaneously, but the fruits of our labour may not mesh well with each other - but working in such a way that everyone has a role. Everyone's input is respected, a common goal is understood, and there is a mechanism in place to work out differences.

**How does collaboration play out for you in your professional environment (with your peers)?**

**G:** It means consulting with colleagues, sharing course information, and it means team teaching in the university teacher education context. Typically (although not always) I have been the lead instructor working with an assisting instructor. In these cases, although I am responsible for the design and general content parameters of the course, my colleague and I meet regularly to talk about content emphases, learning tasks, our own various contributions to the learning experience of students through- different course procedures, etc. My courses have always benefited greatly from the collaboration with colleagues.

**LM:** Like anything, it depends on the participants' the views of what "the teacher" means. I think most teachers come from a place where they want to exchange their ideas, knowledge and experience with others. However, if a teacher comes from a perspective of "teacher as authority" and not as a co-structor, this act of collaboration is somewhat challenging because all

involved have different perspectives of their role as participant – whether it be the authority, creator, critic, or corrector. Sometimes this idea of "teacher as authority" seeps into one's professional environment and some teachers may be understandably leery of collaboration. This is because they have had less than favourable experiences of sharing due to this "Antiquated ideas of "authority" can give rise to an environment of judgment and disrespect. However, that being said, I have been lucky to have had the opportunity to work with some wonderful teachers. We collaborated in an arena where contributors' thoughts, ideas, and experiences were equally acknowledged and appreciated, and those participants became shareholders in the creative process.

**TT:** Collaboration is part of my day to day working life. Although there may be aspects of my job that I do alone, everything plays out for the goals of the organization. My relationship with fellow administrators, instructors, and students is one where I hope we can work together collaboratively to realize everyone's goals and work out amenable solutions for problems that arise.

**What role does collaboration play in your classroom -- student to student and/or teacher to student?**

**G: Student-student:** I typically set up my courses so that students are involved in tasks that require everyone to contribute something to ensure that the task is successfully completed. When group tasks are complete, groups then teach each other and/or review each others' tasks in a semi-structured manner that

encourages deeper engagement with content. In most cases my classes consist of about 25% direct instructor input, 50% student collaborative work, and about 25% individual student work, although it varies with the course. In some courses a portion of each class is used for collaborative work, in other courses a certain number of days in each unit goes to collaborative work, depending on the scope of the collaborative task.

**Teacher-student:** My role in the collaborative process is first of all procedural—I spend a considerable amount of time behind the scenes on design, thinking about and creating -tasks that have the potential to result in a beneficial collaborative learning experience, assembling enough background information (e.g., in the form of materials for students to read or view) and providing structure so that students have what they need to focus on collaborative content learning itself. Some experts suggest that it is helpful for students to negotiate roles and procedures in collaborative work and that this is itself a type of learning. While I recognize the value of this, in groups of people with diverse backgrounds, there are multiple factors and assumptions underlying negotiations and understandings of who should do what and how, and a lot of time and energy can go into the mechanics of setting things up rather than the intended content focus. I try to provide enough of a framework to ensure that student energy goes primarily into the content focus rather than negotiation of task procedures. Secondly, my role is to scaffold learning by the way I respond to questions and the way I ask questions—the goal is always to help students use what they know to move forward in reaching new understandings. In that process I am

a learning partner as well, learning from the insights that students bring to the process.

**LM:** It is a “student to student” interaction with some “teacher to student” collaboration. I am a big fan of Michael Long’s “Interactional Hypothesis” which states that when English language learners share common goals and interests, they communicate with another better. While I am working in an academic setting, I feel that through paired or small group activities, there is an increase in the amount of meaningful and interesting interactions and this creates more opportunities to use English while creating knowledge. Moreover, the more proficient students can help other learners through these interactions. Now this doesn’t suggest a teacher foists the weaker students on to the stronger ones. All students have varied knowledge, ideas and experience that contribute to the learning process. Hence, it is through collaboration that students learn from each other and support each other. As a teacher, I also participate in this learning community. I am not just a teacher who administers knowledge to a passive group, but a facilitator or co-structor in the formulation of knowledge. Rather than teach based on authority, my aim is to help the students build on their own knowledge. Also, as a teacher, I should be encouraging students to take ownership over the acquisition of knowledge by posing questions about the topics being studied.

**TT:** As an administrator, I’ve had the opportunity to visit a number of different classrooms and observe a myriad of teaching practices. I don’t think that group work necessarily equates collaboration, though I have seen a few classes where there is truly teacher-student or student -student

collaboration. Recently there was one instructor in particular who devised an entire course syllabus with her students as a collaborative exercise. They determined together what they’d cover. The teacher was aware of what the students needed in terms of their language-learning needs, but she empowered the students to feel that they had a real say in what they’d be learning - but not in such a way that they felt angry that the teacher wasn’t doing the work! She approached this



collaborative task whereby both sides felt they were contributing positively. At the end of term, the students gave the teacher glowing evaluations, and I could sense that the entire term was a success.

### **How has your view on collaboration changed over time?**

**G:** I believe I’ve grown in depth of understanding. Whereas I used to focus more on the “what” (e.g., What kind of pair work or group work could I include to bring variety to the learning experience?), I’ve come to also think increasingly about the “why” (e.g.,

Why is this going to be helpful?) and “how” (e.g., How can I set this up to promote deep learning of the content focus? How can I design it in a way that has the potential to facilitate maximum learning for students with different needs?).

**LM:** In the beginning, my intent was to give students the opportunity to ‘save-face’ when I asked them to give an answer in front of the class. So, before going over the answers as a class, I always started with



saying, “Compare your answers”. In comparing their answers, students talked about why certain answers were correct, and more importantly, why others were incorrect. Of course, there were those who just copied other students’ answers, but they were the minority. I soon realized that if I made students actually work together to figure out the answer, it made the learning more meaningful as they might have a greater chance remembering the knowledge since they had to work out the problem rather than just exchange their reasons for having the correct answer.

**TT:** I think I’ve come to view collaboration as distinct from group work. In collaboration, people are working on something together, but not necessarily in the same way or even at the same time. I’ve also discovered that in order for collaboration to work, you need really clear guidelines and objectives, but you also need a certain level of group dynamics, and that doesn’t always happen.

**What has been a memorable negative or positive experience with collaboration? How did it change you/your practices?**

**G:** When doing my own graduate studies I was involved in a collaborative project that had very little structure. A lot of time and energy went into negotiating roles and there were also different understandings of what the content focus was to include. I spent hours on the project. At the end of the course we had to present our work. The professor (a visiting scholar from another university) had a hard copy of our paper on which he made a few notes as we talked. At the end of the session, as he left the class, he dumped the hard copies of student presentations in the garbage can. I was one of a few students still in the classroom and noticed what he’d done. I made sure I was the last one out and retrieved the copy of our presentation. His scribbled notes were few, but it was obvious that he felt my part of the project had been off base. The lack of guidance at the outset, leading to hours of wasted effort on my part, combined with his literal and symbolic classification of our work as “garbage” at the end, led to a lot of reflection. Among other things, it taught me to consider how I might demonstrate respect for my students’ time and resources in the design and management of

collaborative work. It also reminds me to cultivate an attitude of appreciation for the outcomes of collaborative learning even if they are not exactly what I anticipated.

**LM:** I think my biggest challenge with collaboration in the classroom was when I was presented with a group who didn’t want to DO anything – “Just give me the answer, Teach!” The first week became a stand-off of ‘the waiting game of wills’. The problem was that they thought I should be just lecturing and telling them the information so that they could restate it later in an exam, and I thought they should work together to analyze the information and come to their own conclusions resulting in acquired knowledge. I didn’t take into account the students’ past learning experiences or their personal and/or cultural perceptions of the learning process and even their views of teacher-student interaction. What I should have done is introduce the concept of collaboration and its part in the academic classroom through activities; some of which include perceived expectations and outcomes. Moreover, students need to know WHY they should share their ideas with their classmates. They need to be aware of the benefits of collaborating with the people around them and how it will serve them in their academic or professional career.

**TT:** I haven’t been in the classroom as a teacher for a few years, but my strongest experience of collaboration when I was a classroom teacher was actually from teacher to teacher. I was a novice teacher of a course that had several sections running simultaneously. Three of us were relatively new instructors and had never taught that particular course. We devised a system where we collaborated on quiz making and computer lab lesson planning. It

worked out swimmingly. One week one of us would take on creating the quiz for a particular chapter, and another would devise a language lab lesson plan, also related to the chapter. The following week, we'd switch. We could really take the time to ensure that what we were creating was good. We also could learn from one another based on how the other instructors approached the task, and the students weren't bored because the quizzes and labs reflected the teachers' different styles. The students weren't stuck doing the same kind of activity week after week. The following term, two of us were teaching the same course again. We tried to recreate the experience of collaboration with other instructors, but we didn't have the same level of success - the previous sense of synergy was gone. The initial foray into collaboration has remained a really great memory for me of how teachers can work together really successfully.

**Do you see more benefits or drawbacks to collaboration in TESOL? Please explain.**

**G:** There are some drawbacks (e.g., it can be a lot easier to work on one's own!); however, I believe the benefits of collaboration easily outweigh any drawbacks. We live in a world where collaboration between people of diverse backgrounds and perspectives is vital. Collaboration between students, teachers, schools, schools and the community, and so forth is very important as a means of fostering increased understanding on many levels in society. And society is us! I think we all gain when we strategically work towards developing collaborative skills and an appreciation of the benefits of working together in the classroom and beyond.

**LM:** The benefits are that collaboration creates a more cohesive learning community and this makes the classroom a comfortable and supportive environment in which to learn. As students are exchanging their own ideas or knowledge, they engage in the language, they are required to access previously learned knowledge, and they build onto it, all of which is essential when learning a language. As a teacher, I find the classroom an interesting place because I am always learning new information from students due to their varied backgrounds and experiences.

Of course there are drawbacks. One is that students need to be taught collaboration, which can be daunting when the syllabus requires you to cover so many other things... in only three months! Another drawback is finding various covert ways to lightly push those who don't want to contribute, while at same time encouraging those who are enthusiastically sharing to hold back a little; doing all this without making either party feel pressured or hindered. I think 'the biggie' in the drawbacks is finding activities tailored for a collaborative academic classroom. While there are a few, most activities are EFL or ESL oriented, so you end up either adapting the published activities to suit your needs or creating new activities. This latter one can take up a lot of time and energy outside of the classroom.

**TT:** I immediately feel that there are more benefits than drawbacks to collaboration in any field, not just TESOL. I see teaching as primarily a kind of solo endeavour - we have colleagues, but when we are 'teaching' we are not with our peers, we are in front of our students. Still, I think we have more to gain than to lose by working collaboratively - not only

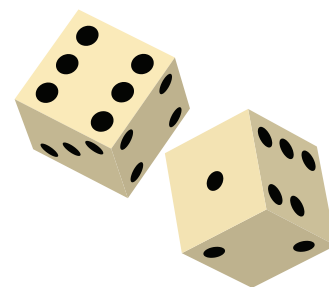
with our fellow instructors, but also with our students.

How can we not benefit from working together? If more than one person contributes to a lesson plan, a test, a curriculum, a syllabus, how can those things not be better than if just one person made it? (Even though the pitfall of "mishmash sans editing" may result.) By working collaboratively, we learn from one another, we expand our repertoires, we gain insights, and even in some cases learn very clearly what not to do.

Even when we aim for instructor collaboration with or among the students, I still feel that as a teacher, we have the final say. Dare I say as well that there are certain groups of students for whom the idea of collaboration with the instructor is foreign? Indeed, even collaboration with their fellow students. On the other hand, if teachers wanted a purely collaborative classroom, would the objectives of the class somehow be lost? Would the teacher lose control?

Obviously there can be drawbacks to working collaboratively. If anything, it is hard work. We have to learn how to work with and adapt to other people's styles. I have seen time and again that teachers in the classroom love to put their students into groups, but those same teachers will resist being put into working groups with their own colleagues!

Yet when people work well together, it can be truly amazing, and make for work that is enjoyable.



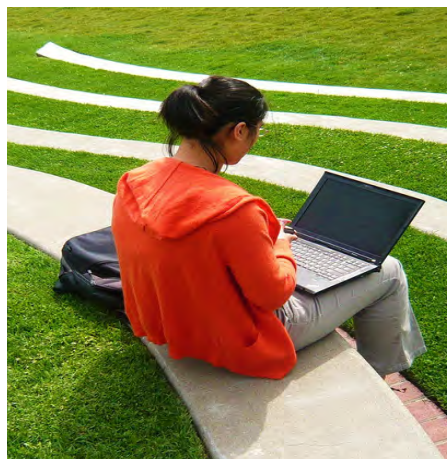


represent a variety of genres, such as everyday conversation, lectures, seminars, meetings, radio and television programs, essays, and so on” (Huang, forthcoming; Johnson & Johnson, 1999). Some examples of commonly known and readily available online corpora include the British National Corpus (100 million words), the Corpus of Contemporary American English (410 million words), the Collins WordbanksOnline English corpus (56 million words), and the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (1.8 million words), to name a few.<sup>1</sup> The predecessor of the CADL approach used in the classroom is data-driven learning (Johns, 1994), which involves developing learners’ ability to see patterning in the target language and to form generalizations. By extension, the CADL approach entails encouraging learners to take the role of language researchers who engage in discovery learning and to learn how to learn through activities that involve observations, analyses, and interpretations of language-use patterns through the use of corpora (Chen et al., 2003; Huang, 2008).

### What does the research say?

Corpus linguistics (i.e., computer-assisted analysis techniques for studying texts) is a young specialization within the field of applied linguistics. Its contribution and usefulness in teaching and learning, however, have been receiving growing and considerable attention and recognition (refer to Bennett, 2010; Conrad, 2005; Hunston, 2005; Reppen, 2010; Sinclair, 2004). Over the past 10 years, an increasing number of studies have shown the benefits of using corpora in language learning (e.g., Bernardini 2002; see also Boulton, 2010) and demonstrated how learners can use data from corpora to further their language

learning (see Hunston, 2005), though few quantitative studies have linked learners’ performance to using corpora based on pre- and post-test assessments (e.g., Boulton, 2008a, 2009, 2010). Very recently, the amount of guidance or training required to effectively benefit from using corpora has been called into question. Some have recommended substantial training (e.g., Estling Vannestål & Lindquist, 2007), while others have provided evidence that only a minimal amount of training is needed (e.g., Boulton, 2008b; Huang, forthcoming). Some have also suggested using paper-based materials generated from corpora, rather than accessing corpora via computers (e.g., Boulton, 2010).



Using corpora in language teaching, like any methodological advancement, is certainly not without controversies. Debated issues include whether texts from corpora, when taken out of their original contexts, should still be considered “authentic,” and whether or not texts that may have been stripped of their contextual features reflect the learners’ own linguistic, sociolinguistic, and sociocultural contexts (see Seidlhofer, 2003). Despite the debates, the data now available from corpus linguistics have made fairly clear that people often do not use a language as

specified in grammar books (e.g., Biber & Reppen, 2002). Researchers have acknowledged using corpus data to provide descriptive insights relevant to how people actually use language in different contexts and have identified online corpora as tools that enable students and instructors to analyze how people use different language forms at various levels of formality and how language fulfills different speech functions across various contexts; these tools and endeavours promote the transferability of language skills and language-learning strategies (see Hunston, 2005; Sinclair, 2004).

### What can we do?

As Susan Conrad, a leading figure in the corpus linguistics area of the field of second-language acquisition, pointed out (in Reid, et al., 2008), the myth that corpus-based research is too complicated to be useful for instructors remains prevalent. Her observations echo what I have encountered in my own teaching of current and future EAL practitioners since the rise of corpus-aided learning. Many seem to believe that learning to use corpora, efforts to incorporate corpora, and introducing students to their effective use are too time-consuming and complicated. My experience and understanding have been that many instructors are eager to use corpora when they are introduced to the possibility, but they, like their students, often become frustrated because they need training to become familiar with the specific search syntax required to effectively perform searches. Like their students, instructors may become overwhelmed with the sheer amount of data generated from the corpora or by the task of selecting or incorporating what’s appropriate for their students. But this situation

needs not persist. Corpora and corpora sources have increasingly become more accessible and user-friendly since the first computer corpora was built some 30 to 40 years ago, and quantum leaps have been made, especially in the past few years. Existing corpora, many of which are now readily available online, have become increasingly workable resources that language instructors can use as meditational tools that bring natural language into the classroom through hands-on learning. Discovering patterns of language need not require advanced research or computational skills. Students can engage in relatively simple tasks, such as searching for word frequency, analyzing the use of a particular lexical item with meanings that may vary depending on the context, examining the use of collocations and idioms, and comparing collocates of verbs that learners might often misuse. At the same time, more advanced learners can explore the use of stranded vs. fronted prepositions; singular and plural verb agreement for neither/either ... nor/or and none of/no + noun phrase; subjunctive mandative, "should" mandative, and covert mandative constructions (e.g., It is essential that she be/she should/she is notified.); the use of "different from," "different than," and "different to;" and the list goes on. In summary, the CADL approach has opportunities for learning ranging from simple to sophisticated searches, and learners at all levels can benefit.<sup>2</sup>

I have incorporated corpora in several of my classes and have also conducted two empirical studies in my own teaching of English grammar and usage course in order to examine learners' use of corpora with minimal guidance (e.g., Huang, forthcoming).<sup>3</sup> My own research to-date, along with evidence from the literature, has

supported the efficacy of the CADL approach, and I feel confident about encouraging readers, if they have not already done so, to experiment with corpora and corpora sources to whatever extent best suits their teaching and their students' learning needs. In a column of this length, it's not possible to fully exemplify the CADL approach, so I refer readers to both Reppen's and Bennett's titles (highlighted in the reference section), which are hot off the press and provide very accessible and guided step-by-step entry into using corpora in the language-learning classroom. Their books include concrete examples and plenty of activities and materials that readers can incorporate into their teaching for specific instructional or learning needs. There are also lists of readily available corpora resources and tools, and instructions on their use, as well as additional web resources with corpus-based activities relevant to various teaching contexts. These resources are carefully described and written specifically for practitioners. The abundant recently published research articles and practical references that focus on using corpora in language-learning classrooms (e.g., Bennett, 2010; Boulton, 2010; Reppen, 2010) provide a clear indication that corpora and their use are gaining unprecedented attention and recognition in the field and are not going away anytime soon.

As numerous researchers cited here have pointed out, activities that require learners to analyze corpus data are consistent with current principles of language-learning theory. Such activities promote noticing (Schmidt, 1990) and lexical, grammatical, and discursal consciousness-raising, which, in turn, enhance language learning and development. Also, learners increase their autonomy when they are provided opportunities

and guidance on how to observe language and make generalizations. Most importantly, the CADL approach, with its emphasis on exploring how language is used in different real-world contexts, will likely have a longer and deeper learning impact than the mastery of any lexico-grammatical point through conventional instructional approaches.

## Notes

1 For more examples, visit: Mark Davies' free online corpora: <http://corpus.byu.edu>; International Corpus of English: <http://ice-corpora.net/ice/>

2 In addition to using existing corpora, there are also free online text concordances (e.g., [www.lextutor.ca/concordancers/text\\_concord](http://www.lextutor.ca/concordancers/text_concord)) that allow users to simply copy and paste in their own texts (e.g., the introduction of a journal article in a specific discipline for those teaching English for academic purposes) to create a mini corpus for analysis that is manageable and relevant.

3 For a very quick account of how to implement the CADL approach, which I wrote specifically for practitioners, visit, visit <http://exchanges.state.gov/english/teaching/forum/archives/2008/08-46-4a.html>.

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- The author welcomes readers' comments or further questions about the content of this column, as well as suggestions about theories that they would like to have featured in upcoming columns. She can be contacted at [lshuang@uvic.ca](mailto:lshuang@uvic.ca). You can also follow Dr. Huang on Twitter at [twitter.com/AppLingProf](https://twitter.com/AppLingProf).

# Teaching Abroad

*By Karen Brooke*

Imagine a golden land where the recession is but a distant myth. Highly paid EFL jobs and Gucci handbags abound. This country is not a dream - it's Qatar, a small thumb-shaped country sticking out of the Arabian Peninsula. Qatar is living the high life off its huge natural gas resources. In addition to diamond encrusted iPhones and top of the line Land Cruisers, the country is splashing out on the best education money can buy. In addition to an excellent local public university, Qatar has invited a number of universities and colleges from abroad to set up cutting edge programs on their own soil.

Two Canadian institutions have campuses in the capital city, Doha: the College of the North Atlantic Qatar (CNAQ), and the University of Calgary, Qatar (UCQ). For Canadian teachers looking to work here, the best bet for employment is with one of these schools. UCQ is smaller, with about 70 students, and offers only a bachelor of nursing degree. CNAQ has many more students and a large variety of programs.

I came to Doha a year ago on a two year contract with the University of Calgary, looking for a few years of stable work, a chance for some overseas adventure, and the opportunity to save a bit of money. I have not regretted the decision. The chance to work closely with the nursing instructors at UCQ has allowed me a fantastic chance to increase my knowledge of another profession. I also feel lucky to have had the chance to get to know Arab culture through my students, who have been absolutely lovely. In addition, I have started doing a research program with a colleague and four undergraduate students, funded by the state of Qatar, which is an opportunity I would probably never have had in Canada.

Working conditions in Qatar are better than most schools in Canada are able to provide. Teachers in Qatar, both at UCQ and CNAQ have fewer classroom hours, usually about 15 hours per week. A combination of national and school

holidays means that teachers get about 11 weeks off per year. Unlike in Canada, if there are not enough students to make classes for all teachers, teachers will be reassigned to other duties. And I'm sure you are interested in the salaries: at CNAQ and UCQ, pay is typically between 70 and 80 thousand Canadian per year, paid in Canadian dollars. Housing will also be provided, as well as a transportation allowance and a living allowance of about 20% of base salary. Schools will cover or

are gracious and good humoured with expatriates in their country - a good thing, since Qataris make up only 20% of their own country.

If you are considering working here, most hiring takes place in the early spring for fall start dates. Smaller intakes happen in January, and CNAQ in particular may hire a few teachers at other times during the year as well. Don't be surprised if the final word on your hiring comes just a



contribute to the tuition of dependent children and will provide yearly return flights for teachers and their family.

Although I love my job, life here isn't always easy. Qatar has one of the highest motor vehicle accident rates in the world. There are few days when we don't see a dramatic new wreck on the way to work. The legal system can feel restrictive and erratic. All expatriate workers need a visa not only to enter, but also to leave the country. Expatriates can be deported for offenses ranging from wearing tank tops to indulging in a moment of road rage. Non-white minorities (like my husband) sometimes experience less than hospitable treatment.

Still, Qatar is considered one of the most progressive Arab countries. Some information for women - No, you won't have to wear a headscarf. Alcohol is available in hotels and at one special outlet. For the most part the Qataris

few weeks before your start date. If you have children that need to be in school, find them a place in a school here as soon as you are considering coming, as spaces go quickly. Don't expect life here to be easy every day - but do expect to have a rewarding experience and to learn more about a part of the world too often misunderstood by the West. As a student here once said, the real gold of Qatar is the local people and the culture.

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Karen Brooke works at the University of Calgary, Qatar, and at Vancouver Community College. Her main interests are English for Specific Purposes and language testing.



# Celebrating Pat Wakefield

*By Nick Collins*



On a glorious sunny Sunday afternoon, May 9, 2010, family, friends and former colleagues joined together to wish TEAL's first President, Pat Wakefield, a Happy 90th Birthday.

The setting was the magnificent Hycroft, home of the University Women's Club. Was it really 25 years ago that TEAL hosted a retirement party for Pat there with then TEAL Vice-President Bill McMichael piping Pat through the lovely mansion? The same Bill piped Mary into the lobby and managed the extraordinary feat of playing Happy Birthday on the bagpipes.

In her ESL career Pat worked at VCC and UBC, as well as becoming the VSB's first ESL consultant in 1975.

On Pat's retirement TEAL created a scholarship in her name for a TEAL member to travel to a Commonwealth country to study ESL programmes overseas.

If Mary Ashworth was the Fairy Godmother of ESL, then surely Pat was the Queen of ESL. If there is one word that sums up this remarkable person it is 'gracious'. So long live our gracious Pat.

Nicholas J. Collins, ESL,  
Capilano University  
Faculty of Developmental Studies  
Member of Senate



# 3rd Annual B.C. TEAL Fall Interior Conference

By Karen Densky



## “Culture Kaleidoscope: Changing Times, Changing Practices in English Language Teaching”

The third annual BC TEAL Interior Conference was held in Kelowna at Okanagan College on Saturday, October 19. There were approximately 150 conference participants and 18 exciting workshops offered.

As our heads clear from the excitement of the day (and the fabulous wine reception!), we thought it would be informative to summarize the event from the perspective of the emerging members of the TEAL field. The following reflections come from students in the TEAL program at Okanagan College.

### THE DAY

*The TEAL conference was an absolutely amazing event and beyond my expectations. I tip my hat to those involved in organizing, presenting, marketing, entertaining and volunteering their efforts and expertise. It was a stimulating and jam filled day with participants sharing ideas and experience that were quite insightful. I am definitely more excited and eager to get my TESL certificate and start working in this field. (Susan Paziuk)*

### THE SESSIONS

*I feel we were incredibly fortunate to be able to attend such a conference. The variety of sessions available was incredible and it was difficult to choose only 3. It was great to hear questions*

*from those already teaching and to see the many different areas that the skills we are learning in the TESL course can be used. (Linda Frandsen)*

*Also, I enjoyed the seminars. That brings me to what I enjoyed the most, which was the seminar taught by Mike Burri and Karen Rauser. Their enthusiasm was contagious, and their subject matter, *The Rhythm of Language*” was quite fascinating. They both taught very thoroughly, and were a great role model for what an engaging teacher is like. Karen was very animated, and just bubbling with motivation and joy. Mike was funny and knew the material inside and out. They both worked so well together as a team, and got the class involved. Thank You. (Tricia Dalglish)*

*What I enjoyed most about the Conference were the workshops that I participated in. The first workshop was about understanding different cultures. This will be very helpful for me in the future because I plan on travelling a lot as a teacher. It is important to try and understand the different cultures of*



*the students we are teaching, and this workshop was very helpful for that. I enjoyed the exercises we did; they were very interactive and fascinating. In the first exercise, we were given a piece of paper that described different cultural traits. We had to go around the room introducing ourselves as the character on our cards. This helped us to understand how cultural differences can make an introduction very difficult, and can make*

*some people feel very uncomfortable. It put us in the student's shoes, which was a great learning experience. (Lynsey Kaiser)*

A big “thanks” to Dini Steyn for collecting the reflections from the students.

The day was rounded out by a thought-provoking opening plenary session, publisher displays, the TESL student poster competition (won by Karey Wiens and Nicole Fuerst from Thompson Rivers University), yoga, massages, door prizes and an afternoon reception filled with local wine, international cuisine, and some excellent entertainment!



A huge “thanks” to Karen Rauser, Brian Rhodes, the members of the planning committee and all of the red-shirted student volunteers for a fabulous event.

This event would not have been possible without these generous sponsors. Big White, BC TEAL, Cintas, Central Okanagan International Education, CIBC, guard.me, Sun-Rype.

*To conclude, in the words of another student: It was exciting to see the enthusiasm and passion that exists among TEAL professionals and students and to be given the chance to share ideas and opinions with like-minded people. (Rhonda Hogan)*

If you attended the conference please complete this survey. The first 20 responses win Chapters gift cards!

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MKGBJTG>

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*Early Bird Fees—TEAL Members: \$35 / Non-TEAL Members: \$45*

*For registration details check the BC TEAL website at [www.bcteal.org](http://www.bcteal.org)*

*or call 604.736.6330 or fax 604.736.6306*





## What's New at the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks?

The Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB) has been doing some exciting work for the past year. Probably the greatest accomplishment is the completion of the National Consultation process. CCLB hosted 27 facilitated forums across the country with participants from diverse stakeholder groups. The results of the National Consultation informed a strategic plan for the Centre and provided impetus for the revision of the CLB 2000 document. Changes to the document will include easier navigation, the addition of pronunciation and grammar descriptors and more clearly defined descriptions of CLB levels.

Details of the National Consultation can be found in the Annual Report which was published recently at: [http://www.language.ca/display\\_page.asp?page\\_id=787](http://www.language.ca/display_page.asp?page_id=787) . Following are a few highlights of the report.

**Assessment:** The Workplace Language Assessment (WLA) Tool was created to help assess those who are nationally educated and are at a CLB 7-10. It was designed to help place candidates in bridge-to-employment programs.

There is also a new screening tool for citizenship judges and officers to help them understand language levels of new immigrants to Canada. This tool will be developed in partnership with Citizenship and Immigration Canada over the next fiscal year.

Many will be happy to hear that the Summative Assessment Manuals have been revised. The new manuals have been combined into one, easier to use, manual with the tasks recorded on CD-ROM. Copies of the new SAM

manual are available through the CCLB and are priced substantially lower than the previous manuals.

## Professional Development:

In addition to ongoing workshops and training across the country, CCLB has revised its online CLB Bootcamp. This is a 3 unit course that guides practitioners through selecting appropriate CLB tasks and practice in recognizing CLB levels. To gain access to the CCLB elearning portal, sign up at: <http://elearning.language.ca> .

## Occupational Language Analysis (OLA):

The Centre continues to work in partnership with several Sector councils to create OLAs in a number of occupations. OLAs define benchmarks required to perform tasks in specific occupations. This year Child Care, Tourism, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, IT and Communications are some of the occupations for which benchmarks have been defined.

There are also several tools to support the use of benchmarks in employment. Work Ready, for example, is a document produced to help employers and people facilitating employment for newcomers. It clearly explains the CLBs and gives further resources such as best practices for hiring, working and training new immigrants.

For support in the use of Essential Skills, there is a series of 3 guidebooks called Essential Skills Tools and Resources. The guidebooks were designed for workplace trainers, ESL/EFL instructors and those developing National Occupational Standards. For more information on OLAs and Essential Skills, visit: [http://www.itsessential.ca/itsessential/display\\_page.asp](http://www.itsessential.ca/itsessential/display_page.asp) .



## ELSA Upcoming Conferences

### **Metropolis National Conference**

Immigration: Bringing the World to Canada

March 23-26, 2011

The Sheraton Wall Centre, Vancouver

<http://www.metropolis2011.net/welcome>



### **American Educational Research Association (2012)**

NOTE: For the first time, the largest international conference in education, the American Educational Research Association (AERA) will be held in Vancouver in the spring (April 13-17, 2012.) Commonly this conference draws over 10,000 participants, so it is a good venue for information sharing at an international scale. Deadlines for proposals usually fall in mid-July, so plan in advance. Here is a link:

[http://www.aera.net/meetings/Default.aspx?menu\\_id=22&id=283](http://www.aera.net/meetings/Default.aspx?menu_id=22&id=283)

### **ELSA-Net News**

We are posting two new resources we have developed on our Resource Web page. One is Active Living (pre-literacy) on health and wellness topics with very useful visuals, and the other is the new ELSA Youth (Ages 17-24) curriculum resource package (ELSA 2/3, ELSA 4/5). You can find these and other resources on our Resource link at:

[http://www.elsanet.org/links\\_teachers.html](http://www.elsanet.org/links_teachers.html)

## B.C. TEAL 43rd Annual Conference

### **The Teachable Teacher**

We are pleased to announce that the 2011 BC TEAL Conference will be held May 6th - 7th at the Harbour Centre campus of Simon Fraser University in downtown Vancouver.

We hope you will make plans to join your colleagues from across the province for this professional development opportunity.

If you are interested in presenting, the Call for Presentations will be available in early November; if you are interested in joining the Conference Planning Committee, please contact the TEAL office at [admin@bctéal.org](mailto:admin@bctéal.org).

The BC TEAL Annual General Meeting will take place on Friday, May 6th at SFU Harbour Centre.



# TCF Awards and Scholarship Announcements

By Jean Hayley

## **\$\$\$ ATTENTION ESL TEACHERS:**

You may be eligible for SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES FOR STUDY OR TRAVEL. Often, we have few or no applicants for awards, so if you think you might qualify for one, please don't hesitate to apply! \$\$\$

## **The following awards have deadlines in the next six months:**

### **Mary Ashworth Scholarship (deadline December 15, 2010).**

This scholarship was established to assist a graduate student of ESL/EFL Methodology, Applied Linguistics or a related discipline who is studying at a BC university to travel to a TESOL convention or a TESL Canada conference. Value: up to \$1500. The student must be a TEAL member. The recipient is expected to deliver a presentation (either written or at a meeting) about the conference attended.

### **TEAL/TESOL Bursary (deadline December 15, 2010).**

This bursary supports travel to annual TESOL Conventions or TESL Canada conferences. Value: up to \$2500. The applicant must be a member in good standing of TESL Canada or TESOL affiliates. Applications will be evaluated on history of service, need for financial assistance and the extent to which the applicant's attendance at the conference will benefit the local ESL/EFL community.

### **David C Lam Scholarship (deadline January 31, 2011).**

This award is for a graduating BC Grade 12 student who has done ESL work at the secondary level and wishes to pursue post-secondary training at a BC institution.

Value: Two scholarships of \$2500 each.

The student should show academic improvement and school or community involvement or service to others. All high schools in BC receive information and forms from the TCF.

The application includes a personal essay (approx. 500 words) on how post-secondary education will enable the student to make a positive contribution.

Winners are invited to attend the Annual TEAL meeting and to make a presentation.

### **Pat Wakefield Scholarship (deadline March 1, 2011).**

The purpose of this award is to assist a TEAL member to travel to any Commonwealth country to pursue further studies or research in ESL. Value: up to \$4000. Applicants should have distinguished themselves in the ESL field and must be members of TEAL. Send a letter of application, a curriculum vitae and two letters of reference attesting to the value of the proposed study. The winner is expected to deliver a presentation or article for the benefit of TEAL members.

### **AIDS Health and Education Fund (AHEF) (deadline March 1, 2011).**

This award is designed to promote AIDS and health education through content-based ESL instruction. Value: up to \$3000.

You may be eligible for assistance for your project if you are:

- A teacher promoting AIDS prevention and health education instruction aimed at the ESL community.
- A materials writer developing

culturally sensitive AIDS and health education materials available to a wide range of people.

- An organization willing to sponsor or co-sponsor activities dedicated to AIDS awareness or health education

### **Projects & Awards Fund (deadline April 15, 2011).**

This grant is available for research projects, special projects, conferences, seminars, matching funds, seed money and ESL teacher and learner projects. Value: up to \$3000

More details are available on the TCF part of the TEAL website. All applications should be sent to:

BC TEAL#206 - 640 West Broadway  
Vancouver, BC V5Z 1G4

# Research SIG

## A Special Interest Group of BC TEAL

Coordinator: Eddy White, Ph.D.

### I. Introduction

Are you engaged in research as part of a Masters program or other formal course work? Is there something going on in your classes that you would like to investigate? Are you considering doing research but are unsure how to proceed? Would you like to exercise your 'research muscles', and talk (in the flesh) with like-minded colleagues? Are you an experienced teacher-researcher interested in helping others hone their research skills? Can you participate in **monthly meetings** to discuss/report on research plans, or the status of current/completed research?

**This special interest group seeks to encourage teachers to take an inquiry stance towards ESL teaching/learning, and actualize that stance by engaging in research. Monthly group meetings will provide teacher-researchers with a forum to discuss, report on, consider, develop, implement and help publish (e.g. journal articles, presentations) their research.**

### II. SIG Goals – This Research SIG aims to:

- create '**a community of inquiry**' which promotes and makes public the systematic, intentional study by teachers of their own classrooms and work environments;
- provide an opportunity for teacher researchers **to meet, discuss and report on** upcoming, ongoing, or recently completed research projects;
- promote and support English language teaching/learning research, in particular classroom-based research;
- promote understanding and application of effective research design and methodology;
- promote publication of research (i.e. presentations and written accounts) .

### III. An Invitation

Investigate your classes/practices/English, join professional colleagues, **meet, talk, interact**, collaborate, report, present, get/give feedback, develop research skills, plan, design, implement, analyze, conclude, write, publish, disseminate. '**Do**' **research and communicate about it!**

Whether you are new to conducting systematic inquiry or an experienced researcher, this Research SIG will provide a forum for teachers to regularly meet, discuss, and report on planned, ongoing or completed research projects. **Come and join us!**

Monthly meetings will be held at the downtown campus of the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT). If you are interested in joining this Research SIG, contact Eddy White at **ewhite88@gmail.com**.