English Language Learning Magazine

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August 2022

TESL Ontario 2021 member survey report PLUS Benefits and challenges of a hybrid flexible EAP program AND MORE...

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Calendar of Events

September	October	November
September 17: 5th English for Healthcare Conference	October 6: Multilingual Awareness and Multilingual Practices (MAMP3)	November 3–5: NYS TESOL 52nd Annual Conference (November 3-5, 2022)
September 22: Advances in Teaching Foreign Languages to Young Learners - ATFLY	October 12–15: SETESOL Conference	November 11-14: JALT2022: 48th Annual Conference on Language Teaching and Learning
September 22: Google Forms and Assessments	October 21: AZTESOL State Conference: Integrating Language-Literacies in a Multimodal World	November 18: 41st Annual Colloquium TESOL France
September 28: Lessons Learned: Teaching About Racism in the ESL Classroom	October 21–22: 1st International Language-for-all Conference	
	October 26: TESL Ontario 50th Annual Conference: "Celebrating 50 Years of Community, Leadership and Innovation"	

Access **TESL Ontario's** webinars here.

Editor's note

Welcome to another issue of *Contact*.

Summer is coming to an end again, but seemingly this summer was a lot better than the last few. We have learned to navigate through some challenging times for certain. I hope you were able to get out, enjoy the sun, and maybe even travel or do the things you have not been able to do for the past couple of years. For me, the summer is always a bitter-sweet feeling—maybe because it just feels like the fall starts a new year for many— for educators, at least. Here's to a new and promising academic term.

In this issue, we place the spotlight on Dr. Anna Bartosik. With a myriad of roles and experiences, Anna is a language teacher, instructional designer, facilitator, and researcher— among many other things. Anna talks about her recent work, teacher development, and the future of English language teaching. Thank you, Anna, for contributing to the August issue.

As for articles, Stephanie Kinzie summarizes the major findings of TESL Ontario's 2021 members, an overarching look at members' work, their views on member services, benefits, etc. Bill Hodges, Ling Hu, and David Siefker explore the benefits and challenges of a hybrid EAP model at Guelph University. Lorena Chatwell from iTEP International provides an overview of iTEP's new membership and webinar sponsor partnership with TESL Ontario. Lana F. Zeaiter provides an interesting insight into an immigrant English language instructor's view on languages. Abir Hamoudi looks at the need to educate newcomers on Canadian history, with specifc emphasis on Indigenous education. Joanne Jalbert discusses technology in the classroom but also looks at best

practices and why it is important that language learners develop technological proficiency. Finally, Heather Slepchik Zeligman's article explores how outbursts and negative emotions of adult language learners can ultimately bring on educational challenges, and decrease the quality of their autonomy in their personal lives.

Thank you once again to all the authors and their contributions. If you are interested in writing an article, whether it be research-based or even a perosonal essay, I welcome you to reach out, and we can discuss more. Enjoy the issue and whatever is left of summer and thank you for reading. Take care.

Nicola Carozza
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CONTACT

Contact is published three times a year (March, August, and November) by TESL Ontario. March is our conference issue. It is published for the members of TESL Ontario and is available free online to anyone.

Contact welcomes articles of general interest to association members, including announcements, reports, articles, and calls for papers.

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Spotlight — Anna Bartosik

Who is Anna Bartosik?

Hahahaha!

Let's start with how I introduce myself now. I've been saying my name in Polish since December and my identity is tied to my name. It has taken me a long time to stop making it easier for English speakers to say my name.

If you look at my email signature, you'll know how to pronounce my name, my pronouns in the order of languages I am comfortable speaking (she/ona/elle), and my degrees.

I don't know which identity I should highlight; I suppose language teacher because of the content of this interview. We can add professional details as well, such as: instructional designer, facilitator, researcher. These details don't often help, as many people don't understand what an instructional designer does.

I'd like people to know that I am an open, detail-oriented person who responds to challenges, and I enjoy supporting teachers and helping others succeed. I have a memory like an elephant, except for names.

Finally, I'll add that I always make an effort to write in my voice, and I hope that comes through.

Your recently conferred PhD in Languages and Literacies Education, looks at self-directed teacher development in digital spaces. What's your biggest takeaway from your research?

My takeaway has been silent until now. I documented how research participants in my study have been influenced by Twitter, and I didn't have the time to follow up on the people and resources they mentioned. I've been continuing my learning in various ways: following the people research participants mentioned, doing some reading, and listening to some podcasts. Many of these people are from disciplines different from mine, and there are more things to learn: about perspectives from underrepresented groups, about intersectionality, about representation, about racism and colonialism in language teaching. My biggest takeaway from my research is the awareness that I need to keep learning.

Can you speak to your involvement with the LINCDIRE Project?

I'll provide a link to the site so that there is context for my response, but in short, LINCDIRE is a collaborative SSHRC-

Anna Bartosik's work as an educator spans across language learning research, instructional design, teaching, and teacher training/facilitation. In her instructional design work, Anna focuses on digital accessibility, representation, and creating opportunities for students to direct their own learning. Her recent projects include a hybridized accelerated English language learning program, completing her dissertation, facilitating workshops for faculty with a focus on educational technology and Universal Design for Learning, and developing online language learning courses courses using Open Education Resources. Anna is looking forward to new challenges this fall as she begins a secondment with the Teaching and Learning Exchange at George Brown College.

funded project across multiple institutions encouraging and promoting plurilingualism and pluriculturalism in language learning.

I've had the opportunity to have various perspectives working with LINCDIRE and the associated LITE e-portfolio site. My first encounter with LINCDIRE was with the technical elements of the e-portfolio site. I assisted in adding questions (Can-do statements) to scenarios in additional languages so that students could complete their progress on the site. I worked with the developer on the back end by helping them test out new plug-ins and using the e-portfolio in student mode in order to gauge where things could be improved or needed adjusting.

The second element of my involvement with LINCDIRE included visiting teachers' classrooms who were using the LITE e-portfolio site, and I conducted classroom

observations as part of the LINCDIRE research project. My prior experience with the backend of the e-portfolio helped me as a classroom observer to understand what stage of the action-oriented process students were at, and I assisted a bit with some troubleshooting of the site.

Yet another aspect of my work included coding interviews that had been conducted with research participants using NVIVO, a qualitative analysis tool. They were interviews with various teachers whose students had participated in the project as well. We worked together as a group to first individually code the interviews with NVIVO, then convened together to strengthen inter-rater reliability.

These various experiences helped immensely when our team worked to write our respective chapters in the book *Activating Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in the Language Classroom*. Finally, I read the drafts of each chapter and was one of our team's proofreaders.

In one of your latest publications, "Teachers Implementing Action-Oriented Scenarios: Realities of the Twenty-First Century Classroom," you and your co-authors examine action-oriented approaches. How do we see this approach in English Language Teaching?

As a language teacher who is also an instructional designer, I see a number of benefits of using an action-oriented approach to teaching language, regardless of the language being taught. I'm sure you're familiar with outcome-based curricula, and building courses with a backward design is something that instructional designers do regularly, but the agency of the learner is not often present in course design. What I mean is a student doesn't often get the opportunity to guide, plan, and select their learning journey in a supported way. Teachers are often concerned about having all of the answers and seeing only one way to achieve a course outcome, but we don't often see students at the helm, determining or defining a real-life task and what the final assessed product will look like. Students aren't often given an opportunity to reflect on their own learning and provided with that agency to see their plurilingual competency. However, with the action-oriented approach to language teaching, a teacher can provide possible resources and direction for learners, but the learner ultimately is in charge of the journey, and that journey looks very different for each learner, based on their current language abilities.

You have multiple publications—what has been the most rewarding part of being published?

I have had the opportunity to present my research work at various conferences, ranging from local, to national, to those not related to language teaching, like the Social Media and Society Conference in July.

I knew early on in my studies that I wanted to talk about my research openly, and so I've focused on transparency by blogging about stages of my process, tweeting with the hashtag #MyResearch, creating a few TikToks, and talking about my research on podcasts and in recorded webinars. Thinking out loud as I was processing has been rewarding for me; I can't tell you how many people have reached out to me privately or when I meet them; they talk about different things I've posted or recorded that resonated with them, and yet they didn't publicly share their thoughts. These encounters with fellow teachers and researchers reinforce something my research revealed—that silence is **not** not learning. We don't know how our words and work impact others because it's difficult for many of us to publicly acknowledge we don't know something or that we are still learning. When people are in precarious or political work situations, it is even more difficult to add a public voice.

Ultimately, knowing that some people have been impacted by my sharing successes and setbacks is the most rewarding part of learning in the open for me.

What does the future of English language teaching in Canada (or Toronto) look like to you?

Can I give a hopeful answer?

I hope the future of ELT everywhere, but especially in our Canadian context since it affects us most, is not referred to as an "industry" or operationalized as a business model.

I hope the value of language learning is recognized as an asset, and not a deficit. To that end, I hope we see an end to the use of "ESL" in this country and find terms that don't place one language as more important over other languages.

I hope that language teachers have better conditions for working: benefits, salaries which reflect the work they do, vacation, sick days, a say in how students will be assessed without mandatory protocols for settlement language programs, and access to relevant professional development.

I hope that self-directed professional development is recognized and acknowledged by professional organizations

and employers. This should include conducting research and getting degrees.

Finally, I hope that teaching language includes: making all learning materials accessible and free, both in print and digitally; providing language learners with more agency; encouraging multiple languages and perspectives in the classroom; using resources which reflect the experiences and voices of learners and surrounding communities; and continuing to build online language learning resources and courses, because there is value to studying language online.

If you would like to know more, please visit Anna's site.
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__Thank you once again for your contribution, Anna!__
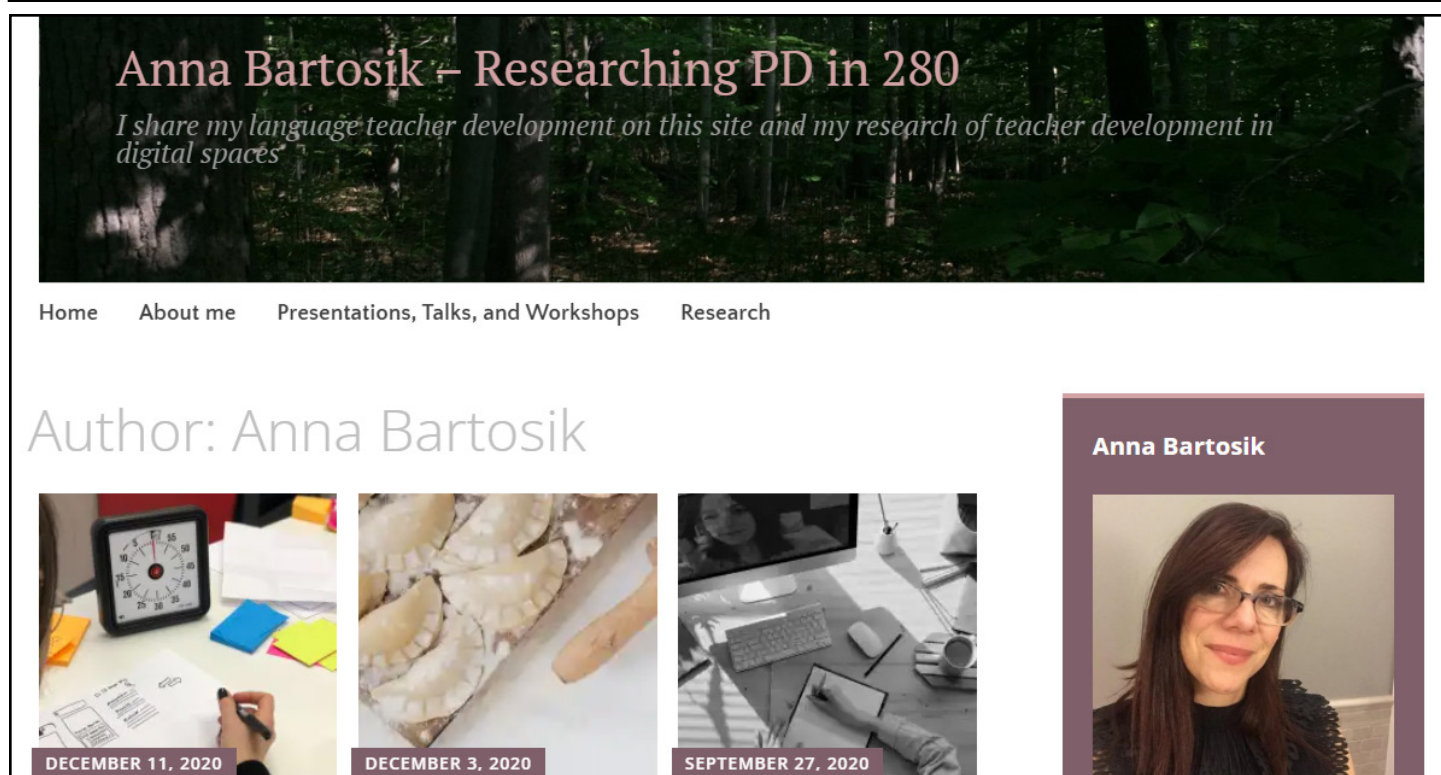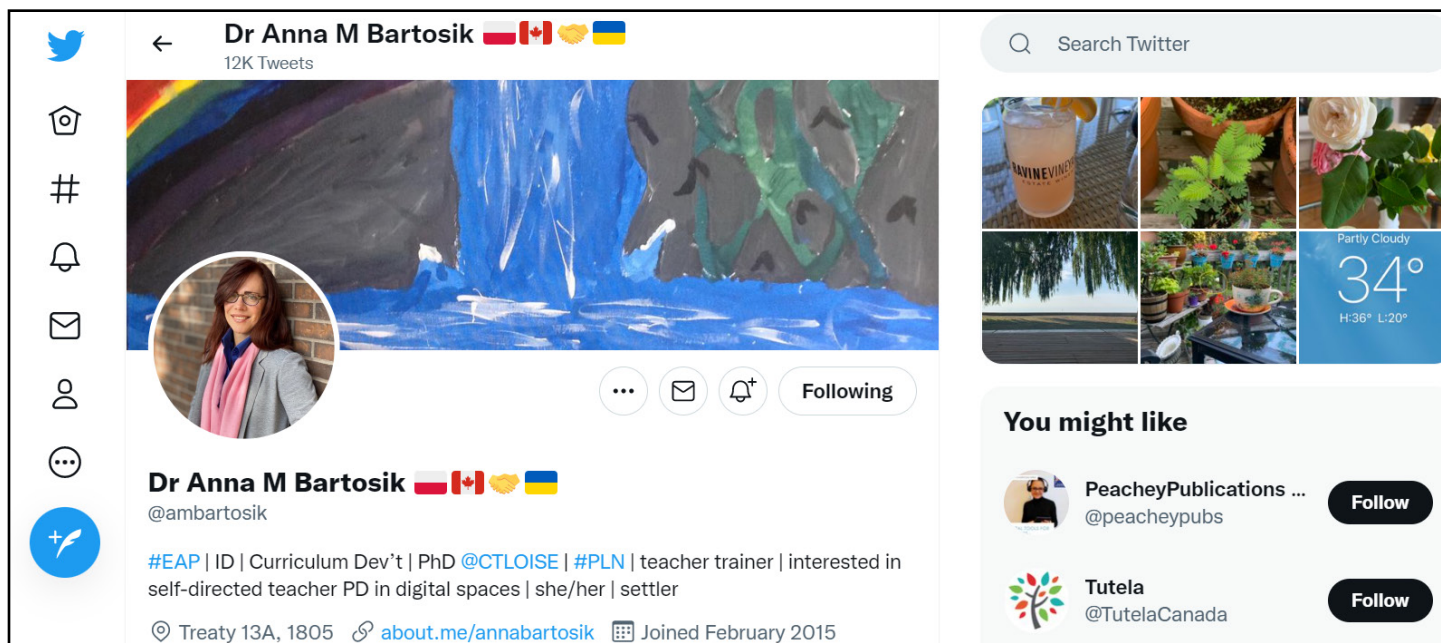
TESL Ontario 2021 member survey report

By Stephanie Kinzie, York University, Canada

Abstract

This report summarizes key findings of TESL Ontario's 2021 member survey, in which TESL Ontario members shared information about themselves, their work, and their views on member services and benefits. Members were employed in a variety of positions and contexts in Canada and internationally and engaged in ongoing professionalization through TESL Ontario's wide variety of PD offerings. Members reported difficulties in finding stable employment and managing the switch to online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Future directions for TESL Ontario include providing support to meet online/remote teaching and learning needs, additional employment resources, and member advocacy.

For 50 years, TESL Ontario has represented ESL instructors in Ontario and worked alongside them to provide resources and training to improve language learning for students and teachers in diverse learning and teaching contexts. As it did in 2012, in 2021, TESL Ontario decided to survey its members with the goal of understanding the current conditions of ESL instruction in Ontario and ascertaining the key issues and concerns members are facing. This information will be used to modify existing services and resources and to create new ones that respond to members' professional needs. It is also hoped that the findings will allow TESL Ontario to engage with various levels of government and inform policies and initiatives that affect ESL instruction in the province.

Method and design

The development and content of the survey was, in many ways, similar in design to that of 2012 (see Valeo, 2013). Instead of one survey as in 2012, quarterly surveys were distributed through the TESL Ontario

membership email list. Survey 1 collected demographic and employment information to provide a snapshot of the current membership. Survey 2 collected information about members' professional development experiences and online communities; the goal was to understand members' engagement with TESL Ontario's various online platforms, improve communication within the community, and assess members' PD needs and wants. Survey 3 concerned members' experiences with TESL Ontario's certification processes and member services with a view to improving both. Survey 4 requested information regarding steps TESL Ontario can take to address key challenges faced by TESL instructors and students. Response rates ranged from 7%-20% of the organization's 4500+ members. All 12 affiliate chapters were represented in the survey data.

Key findings

Survey 1

Survey 1 requested information about demographics and employment. 938 members, or about 20% of TESL Ontario's membership, responded. Of these, the vast majority (80%) held certified memberships, although volunteers, students, and retirees were also represented. As they did in 2012, 83% of respondents identified as female, and the majority of respondents (58%) fell within the 41-60 age bracket. 48% had been TESL Ontario members for 10+ years, whereas 36% had fewer than 5 years of membership. 87% had completed a TESL/TESOL certificate/diploma program, an increase of 5% since 2012, and nearly 47% held a graduate degree, an increase of 6% since 2012.

In a small increase from 2012, 43% reported working full-time in the TESL field, 22% were working part-time, and the remaining 34% held contract, volunteer, or other positions. Of these same respondents, 64% reported holding one paid position; 26% reported holding 2-3 positions. School boards, colleges, and community agencies were respondents' top three employers. The majority of respondents worked in LINC or funded adult ESL programs, and many also worked in ELS/OSLT/elementary or secondary ESL, for private institutions, or were self-employed. Pre-pandemic, the most common position held by respondents was that of language instructor in an in-person program (49%); 29% were language instructors in online or blended programs. Respondents actively searching for work at the time of the survey mentioned finding relevant job postings, high levels of competition, and limited positions as significant barriers to success.

As in all fields of employment, the pandemic continues to have a global impact on TESL/TESOL instruction. For 55% of respondents, the pandemic has meant a transition from in-person to online teaching. Only 7% were already teaching online or in a blended program, pointing to the prevalence of in-person instruction in the field and to the high level of disruption occasioned by the transition to online learning. Respondents

who continued to work during the pandemic reported an increased workload due to greater demands for unpaid preparation, student support, and training. Many respondents also mentioned decreased hours, lost jobs, and fewer employment opportunities since the pandemic began.

Survey 2

Survey 2 requested information about professional development and online communities. 753 members, or about 16% of TESL Ontario's membership, responded. The TESL Ontario website was a practical resource for members, who visited it primarily for membership renewal, PD and conference information, and employment purposes. Social media use continued to be low, although members who engaged with TESL Ontario through its various platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube) were satisfied with their experiences. Visitors to the TESL Ontario blog appreciated the variety of content and topics but would like to see more posts providing practical strategies for in-person and online teaching; mental health and work-life balance strategies; employment and interview tips; links to other provincial TESL organizations; and non-LINC resources. The majority of respondents used or planned to use the Directory of Best Practices. Suggestions for additional Directory resources included: benchmarked PBLA and CLB materials, information for non-TESL-certified program administrators, and more content for adult immigrant learners. TESL Ontario Webinars, both live and recorded, were a popular and satisfactory resource for 74% of respondents. The most popular types of PD events were training sessions, presentations, and demonstration sessions, pointing to the practical nature of TESOL and the need for usable pedagogical and classroom strategies.

The virtual 2020 TESL Ontario conference was attended by 35% of respondents. 55% received some financial support to attend the conference, and 54% would not attend the conference without such support. The cost and/or length of the conference may have prevented a number of respondents from attending. Post-pandemic, many members would prefer a two-day hybrid conference with 3-4 daily sessions. Affiliate chapter events, attended periodically by more than half the respondents, were popular because they provided convenient and meaningful opportunities to connect with local peers. Many members were pleased with the scope and variety of TESL Ontario's PD offerings, but a pressing need for PD providing strategies for career advancement/employment and online/remote teaching was indicated.

Survey 3

Survey 3 requested feedback regarding certification and member services. 477 members, or about 10% of TESL Ontario's membership, responded. Respondents found the OCELT certification process easy to understand and navigate, and reported that certification offered professional recognition and credibility,

membership in a professional community, employment opportunities, and portable proof of knowledge and skills. Respondents were, however, largely unfamiliar with other TESL Ontario certifications (ICTEAL, CTESOL, TESL Trainer, PTCT Instructor). To improve certification services, respondents mentioned streamlining the documentation requirements, improving and expanding online submission capabilities, and creating partnerships with TESL training institutions to communicate clearly expectations for certification.

The most-accessed TESL Ontario member services were PD sessions, the annual conference, and the various TESL Ontario publications. Existing non-PD benefits, particularly retail and insurance deals, were highly appreciated, and members would like to see the range and variety of non-PD benefits expanded to include tech and software subsidies and travel benefits. A Mentoring Program was begun in Fall 2021; it has proven popular and, in the future, respondents would like to participate in regularly-scheduled, one-on-one or small group mentoring that provides support/professional advice, networking opportunities, career development assistance for new and in-service teachers, and best practices information. Likewise, the existing TESL Ontario Job Board is a valued resource that has much potential for expansion. A new Career Centre/Portal should offer distinct features from existing job sites like LinkedIn, however, and should include links to external job postings, continuing education opportunities, résumé and cover letter help, and sector-specific job search tips.

Many suggestions for new or improved member services were provided. Some have already been mentioned; other popular options included: creating more inclusive opportunities for smaller affiliate chapters/ locations; promoting member research and providing access to reputable publications; more frequent social media use; more efficient and communication regarding TESL Ontario information and services; and advocacy.

Survey 4

Survey 4 requested feedback regarding challenges facing our TESL community and the related support members would like to receive from TESL Ontario. 316 participants, or about 7% of TESL Ontario's membership, responded. The linguistic challenges faced by today's ELLs are often superseded by personal, familial, technological, and social challenges that limit learning, employment, and integration to Canadian society. Respondents indicated that they lacked resources to address these issues and would benefit from the provision of PD and ready-to-use instructional resources to capacitate instructors and improve learners' experiences both inside and outside the classroom. A great deal of interest was shown in creating community and workplace links to help instructors and students learn about and access social and professional support and to help learners transition into the Canadian workforce. Members' responses indicated a willingness to

learn and adapt to the changing landscape of ESL instruction. The desire for usable, ready resources reflects the underlying pragmatism of TESL instruction, yet it also points to the heavy (and often unpaid) workload of planning and creating resources for diverse learners.

Conclusion

What have we learned?

Although the total number of TESL Ontario members has increased over the past ten years, the 2021 data point to a remarkable stability within TESL Ontario's membership. Most members still identify as female, and most are within the 41-60 year age category. Slightly more members held full-time employment at the time of the survey than in 2012, and slightly more held more than the minimum required educational level for TESL Ontario certification. Social media use continues to be low, yet members do want and appreciate timely information from TESL Ontario regarding professional development opportunities, resources, and other professionally-relevant news. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the urgent need for training and resources that will help ESL instructors function effectively in online, hybrid, and in-person modalities. Many of the other concerns shared by members—difficulties finding appropriate resources, lack of real-world connections for students, and challenging and often unfair working conditions—are not new, and point to areas where TESL Ontario could productively focus its attention and resources.

Survey methodology carries with it inherent limitations. Although opportunities to provide additional comments were included throughout the four surveys, many of the questions were formatted as sets of predetermined values, which limited the range and variety of possible responses. Respondents' comments indicated various ways in which future surveys could more accurately reflect the lived professional realities of TESL Ontario's members. Although input was solicited from the entire TESL Ontario member base, participant numbers were unequal across the four surveys, and members may not see themselves fully reflected in the findings.

Next steps

Despite the aforementioned limitations, the four surveys have provided an updated overview of TESL Ontario's membership as well as insights into members' working conditions, key concerns and needs, and future goals. TESL Ontario thanks those members who took time to share their thoughts and suggestions through the set of surveys, and invites all members to reach out at any time with further suggestions, concerns, and ideas for the future.

References

Valeo, A. (2013). The TESL Ontario member survey: A brief report. *Contact: English Language Learning Magazine*, *39*(1), 54–57.

Author Bio

Stephanie Kinzie is an English language teacher and a PhD student in Applied Linguistics at York University. Her research interests include language teacher education, critical pedagogy, and EAP writing. She has experience teaching English language, literature, and communication in a range of contexts in Canada and internationally and has been a member of TESL Ontario since 2018.

Benefits and challenges of a hybrid flexible EAP program

By Bill Hodges, Ling Hu, and David Siefker, Guelph University, Canada

Introduction

The COVID-19 Pandemic caused changes in modes of instructional delivery in Canadian colleges and universities when many moved to fully remote classes in March 2020. Then, in September 2021, as a part of the Return to Campus Plan at the University of Guelph, the English Language Programs (ELP) pivoted to a program that combined in-person students with remote students living outside of Canada. To ensure a smooth transition and to provide a quality learning environment, the academic team needed to figure out how to teach these two groups of students by taking into consideration multiple factors, such as students' learning needs and preferences, as well as the instructional teams' knowledge, skills, and experience. This paper provides the learning context and rationale for the program teaching mode, how the learning hours were planned and assigned, the benefits and challenges, and some practical guidelines for instructors.

Learning context

If there has been one common theme throughout the pandemic, it has been a need to be flexible (and calm) despite an ever-evolving environment. As we approached the Fall 2021 semester, it became increasingly clear that we faced much uncertainty about how the classes would operate. Since March 2020, we had become used to teaching the students fully remotely using an online platform. However, we now had the unprecedented scenario of teaching two distinct groups of students, one in-person and the other remotely, at the same time. Even as the first day of class approached, questions remained about how many students would study in-person vs. remotely (and whether their status would change throughout the semester), classroom capacity, how instructors and students in both groups would interact, vaccine requirements, physical distancing, and so on.

Students' needs and study preferences

The first consideration was the students' learning needs, skills, and study preferences. By the time classes began, we knew that most of the ELP students were able to study in-person. However, a small portion of the students were unable to study in-person for a variety of reasons, such as difficulties associated with traveling

to Canada or coming to campus. Students were informed that they had the flexibility to study either in-person or remotely, and that we would accommodate the remote learning students to the best of our ability so that they would be provided with a quality learning experience. Of the students studying remotely, a few were living in Ontario, but most were living overseas in China, South Korea, and Thailand. All students had previous experience studying remotely, and so were familiar with using many videoconferencing tools. Given the time difference between Guelph, Ontario and these countries, and given that most of the students were studying in-person, we decided that the in-person and synchronous remote learning hours should be in the morning, which was preferable for the in-person students, and should end before noon before it would become quite late in the evening for the remote students.

Instructor experience

In addition, it was important to take into consideration the instructor team's ability to transition to this new teaching mode. We were fortunate to have a highly experienced team of instructors who had already developed many strategies during the previous 18 months teaching remote students online and who could pivot to teaching this combined in-person and remote environment. The instructors had experience using the online learning management system, called CourseLink, which is a Desire2Learn (Brightspace) learning management system used by the University of Guelph for teaching. They would continue to use Virtual Classroom, which is a tool available in CourseLink or Microsoft (MS) Teams to connect students studying in-person with those studying remotely via-webcam and microphone. Students could engage with their classmates and instructors both in-person and synchronously online during class time (e.g., for lessons, group discussions, presentations, etc.), and they were expected to participate in learning activities asynchronously outside of class (for e.g., taking a quiz, doing exercises on a course textbook's online learning management system (LMS)). For assessments, instructors would continue to use the Quiz tool for creating online quizzes and exams or use the textbook LMS quizzes online. To manage academic integrity, instructors used Respondus + Monitor, which is an online exam proctoring tool, and Turnitin to check for plagiarism in submitted written assignments. Other tools at their disposal included MS OneDrive, which could be used for sharing files for peer collaboration, and the Peer Evaluation Assessment and Review (PEAR) tool from the University of Guelph, which is used for providing written peer feedback on assignments. In-person students would buy textbooks and remote students would buy the e-book version of the textbooks.

In short, the instructors were confident using the tools, and they just needed to figure out how to use those tools in this new teaching mode.

Teaching mode and name

The ELP academic team gave much thought to how to name this new teaching mode. When other institutions pivoted in the Fall 2021 to a combination of in-person and remote learning modes, they adopted numerous terms to name their programs, many of which the reader may be familiar with: Blended, BlendSync (see BlendSync.org for more information), Hybrid, HyFlex (see HyFlex.org for more information), and so on. It has been apparent that numerous terms are being used by institutions to describe the same teaching mode, and in some cases, the same terms are being used to describe distinctly different teaching modes.

Of these terms, HyFlex might seem to be the best term to describe this multi-modal way of teaching. The HyFlex teaching mode is defined by the HyFlex Learning Community as "a classroom experience and at least one online learning experience for students to choose among" (HyFlex Learning Community, 2021). However, the HyFlex Learning Community recommends that it should include a fully asynchronous component, allowing students to study the course completely independently without interacting with the in-person or synchronous remote students. While the ELP courses did provide extensive asynchronous learning activities, such as discussion boards, exercises on the course LMS, and online quizzes, they did not include a fully asynchronous component, so we agreed that HyFlex was not quite a suitable name. However, the delivery was a hybrid of in-person and remote delivery, and it did require instructors and students to be flexible. For the purpose of this article, we will refer to the teaching mode we used as Hybrid Flexible.

Planning and assigning of learning hours

Given the context of great uncertainty about the Fall semester, it was critical that we planned for every contingency and remained flexible. We had the benefit of much experience teaching students remotely, a highly experienced instructor team, and we had collected feedback and formal surveys about the students' study needs and preferences. With this information in mind, two of the three authors of this article who were assigned to teach the Level 9 & 10 courses chose to use the curriculum which had been developed for a fully online distance education as a basis for the Fall Level 9 & 10 Hybrid Flexible courses.

The ELP academic team met several times prior to the program start and created a plan. They decided that the synchronous and asynchronous learning hours could be assigned differently according to numerous factors, such as the course and skill (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) being taught, as well as students' time zone differences, expectations, and level of comfort with in-person learning, etc. That said, the instructors did share some common ways of assigning the Hybrid Flexible class hours.

During in-person and synchronous class time, both groups of students would work collaboratively in pairs or groups using Virtual Classroom or MS Teams to practice newly introduced language skills, receive

instructor and peer feedback, and to discuss questions generated from assignments. Synchronous/in-person assessments were interactive, such as, group presentations and debates, which provided further opportunities for both remote and in-person students to interact and build community.

During asynchronous class time, students would post on discussion boards (e.g., sharing their homework answers and reflecting on the course content), complete self-directed learning tasks (e.g., independent grammar study, course learning goal journals), provide written peer feedback, and prepare for group presentations and debates. Asynchronous assessments were typically completed individually, such as online quizzes and exams, individual recorded video presentations, and vocabulary journals. As well, instructors offered office hours for individual student feedback and support.

Benefits

The benefits we observed in the implementation of this Hybrid Flexible mode were students' increased learning flexibility, enhanced autonomy, and increased accessibility to learning resources.

Being able to choose between in-person or remote study provided significant flexibility for both remote and in-person students. Students who were not able to come to Guelph for various reasons benefited from having the option to learn remotely in their home. Even the in-person students benefited from being able to choose to participate remotely from time to time due to unexpected changes in their lives (e.g., family issues, health concerns, etc.). Several students mentioned that they appreciated having the flexibility to access classes regardless of the geographical locations and uncertainties in their lives. Similarly, in their case study, Bower et al. noted the benefits to both groups, which included "having remote students flexibly access lessons" and "being exposed to a broader range of views and ideas" (2015, p. 13).

In addition to flexibility in participation, the Hybrid Flexible mode provided students with flexibility in time management. The instructors provided flexible time ranges for the students to complete individual assessments. For example, they were able to choose a time to complete an online quiz or provide written peer feedback using the online peer review application PEAR. The student survey feedback collected at the end of semester showed that they appreciated the convenience offered in this flexible scheduling. For example, one student commented, "I would always prefer to have in-person lectures, though the thing that I would always wish to be online is quizzes and test mainly because I can have a controlled environment where I am alone, whereas, in-person quizzes and tests would be in a class with other students meaning more chance for noise." Another student commented, "It'll be convenient for students if the exams and quizzes are online."

Finally, two other benefits of this learning mode were the increased level of student interactions, and the greater accessibility of learning resources. Since the remote and in-person students were in different time zones, it was often challenging for them to interact with each other outside of the synchronous class hours. For this reason, the instructors set up a discussion forum on CourseLink and encouraged the students to collaborate with each other asynchronously to reinforce what they had learned in class. In the reading and writing courses, the instructor checked the students' posts and responses every week, recorded their participation, replied to some of the posts, and summarized the interactions during class. This resulted in an enhanced level of interaction between the two groups and helped build community. Videoconferencing, through Virtual Classrooms or MS Teams, allowed the remote students to receive immediate attention from their instructors, and this synchronous online interaction between students "reduce[ed] learner isolation through real-time dialog and co-construction team activities" (Power & Vaughan, 2010, p. 23). When students met online using MS Teams, they could also turn on live captions to gain a better understanding of discussions. Similar to Stewart et al. (2011), we found that the communication and interactions through videoconferencing technologies enhanced a dynamic collaborative effort among group members. In addition to this increased level of interaction, the course learning materials, such as course outlines, weekly learning contents, class PowerPoint presentations, assignments/assessments descriptions, and learning resources were posted on CourseLink, providing enhanced accessibility for all students.

Challenges

While the instructors and students experienced many benefits in this teaching mode, there were several notable challenges in the learning environment.

Technology: Webcam and audio

Technology is undeniably a key component of the Hybrid Flexible teaching mode, and problems with technology can greatly impact the ability to create and maintain an effective language learning environment. Technological problems tend to impact international students whose first language is not English more significantly (Day & Verhaart, 2016).

One of the most significant technological challenges we experienced was how to best use the webcam in class. In our case, the webcam was either connected externally to the instructor's laptop via USB cable or built-in the instructor's laptop. As White et al. (2010) found, ensuring that the instructor could be in the field of view of the webcam in the class was problematic, as was the level of visibility of in-person students for the remote students. Remote students were projected in the classroom on a screen and that they could be easily seen by the in-person students, but the webcam used in the classroom could not show all the in-person students or with sufficient detail when doing whole class activities. During pair or group work, this

was not really an issue since all students could turn on their webcams when working in the breakout rooms. However, this created another barrier for the instructor as it was challenging to monitor all the remote and in-person groups equally. This became even more challenging when remote students did not turn on their webcams, either because of student choice or connectivity difficulties.

Other significant challenges were caused by the use of and interactions between in-person and remote student laptop microphones and speakers. Occasionally, the voices from the classroom speakers were distorted, and maintaining the correct volume levels proved to be a challenge. At other times, voices of remote students were too loud, too soft, or unclear. The quality and placement of the laptop microphones used for the in-person students was also key to ensure the students' and the instructor's voices could be heard by students online. For example, remote students had difficulty hearing in-person students' responses, which often meant the instructor had to move their laptop microphone closer to the student speaking. Moreover, audio feedback could also be a significant problem when a student's laptop or phone microphone in class was on at the same time as the instructor's microphone.

Lastly, remote students' internet connectivity and bandwidth restrictions impacted both the audio and video quality resulting in little to no ability to hear or be heard in class. This concern was also noted by Park and Bonk (2007) in their study of a Hybrid Flexible learning graduate education technology class, and by White et al. (2010). This was particularly a problem when conducting and assessing live presentations done both in-person and remotely. For example, remote students' audio was occasionally cut off when presenting, or their video would freeze. This problem presented less frequently when working in breakout rooms.

Instructor classroom preparation and multi-tasking

Another challenge for the instructors was the need to adequately prepare before class and to multi-task multiple pieces of equipment during class to ensure a collaborative and participatory learning environment. The classrooms assigned were not designed for a Hybrid Flexible class, so instructors needed to quickly develop skills using various technologies such as the laptop, projector, document camera, microphone, webcam, and creating an optimal seating arrangement. Instructors made sure to arrive well ahead of the start of each class to set up all this equipment. Technological glitches happened a few times throughout the semester, so preparing alternative lesson plans, documents for students to access offline, and backup equipment (a backup laptop and headphones) proved to be essential. Despite these efforts, a balance between class activities and technology-based activities was at times difficult to achieve and could even become a distraction. White et al. (2010) also noted that it is important for the instructor not to overly constrain the in-class lesson activities with a focus on technology that are susceptible to many problems. This multitasking created a challenge for the instructors to keep the learning experience engaging and

balanced for all students. At times, the instructors felt a bit overwhelmed as they tried to ensure that they were visible and audible to both the in-person and remote students through the laptop, responding to backchannel chat, email, and any online collaborating tools like Microsoft OneDrive, and so on. Inevitably, there were times when one group felt they were being neglected. Bower et al. (2015) stated that this extra focus of the instructor on remote students was identified as a problem by in-person students in their study as well.

Student collaboration

While instructors provided many options to encourage student collaboration, it was often hindered not only because of the technological problems noted above, but also because students were living in different time zones, and this problem became more pronounced over the semester. When students needed to prepare for group or pair assignments outside of class hours, it was often difficult to find a time when all could meet, as there was only a small window during the day when all were awake, and this proved to be very frustrating for the students. Another issue was encountered when some remote students would not turn on their microphone or webcam (due to a variety of issues), and some in-person students were at times reluctant to work with remote students in breakout rooms. Stewart et al. (2011) also identified the same problem and stressed the difficulty of ensuring effective interactions between in-person and remote students. Instructors spent part of the class time encouraging remote students to turn on their mics when participation was required, but this became tiring. Park and Bonk (2007) also mentioned the increased effort required by the instructor to expend additional class time and energy encouraging remote students to contribute as well as stimulating meaningful communication and collaboration between the two groups.

Student technological skills and platform use

While most students came well-equipped to use various technologies, we found both in-person and remote students needed time to become familiar with the online tools required to participate in the course and to have the self-efficacy to complete the asynchronous and independent learning portions of the course. White et al. (2010) also identified the importance for remote students to develop technological skills and become familiar with the communication platform, as well as the importance of the reliability and functionality of the system used. Furthermore, both White et al. (2010) and Szeto & Cheng (2016) have stated that in-person students, too, need time and help to adjust to the technological demands and become familiar with the online tools. Another issue that arose unexpectedly was that some overseas students were unable to access and use Virtual Classroom, which necessitated a change to MS Teams after the start of the course. Student self-efficacy in this teaching mode was also a very important consideration because, in order for students to succeed, they needed to have or develop the confidence to solve technological problems. Shen

et al. (2013), in their study of online learners and self-efficacy, indicated that "students' self-judgment about their capabilities to complete an online course is critical for their satisfaction with an online course" (p. 17). Initially, both remote and in-class students expressed uncertainty about how to use the digital tools to access the materials and quizzes, but as they progressed through the semester, and as they became more familiar with the digital tools used in class, that uncertainty diminished. A final important factor we noted was that this learning mode did require a willingness and acceptance from the in-class students to work part of the time online with the remote students even though they were physically present in class with other students.

Discussion

After completing a full semester teaching using this Hybrid Flexible mode, we would like to highlight some key points for consideration.

Classroom and technology preparation

Instructor awareness of what technologies are available in the classroom and online and competence using the technologies played an important role in the effective delivery of course content. The program devoted one day of practice before the term started, which provided an opportunity for instructors and administrators to anticipate and resolve and technological issues. Before class starts, it is also important to arrive early to ensure that all the equipment is set up and to prepare to adapt to different situations; for example, the microphone and webcam need to be set up differently for class discussions and for presentations, and the chairs had to be moved so everyone could be viewable on camera.

It is important to consider which platform to use. Some students had fewer connection issues using a specific platform, and instructors and students also had preferences with certain features, for example, having captions, smooth and timely transitions to and from breakout rooms, viewing the main room while in breakout rooms, and being able to see more students on the screen. Individual instructors in the program chose a platform based on these criteria often with student input. In the program, a few instructors moved from Virtual Classroom to MS Teams due to enhanced features and fewer connection issues.

Student engagement

Student willingness to accept this teaching mode impacted the level of their engagement. Initially, a few in-person students were reluctant to work with remote students, but over time as all students became accustomed to this mode, this reluctance diminished. Consequently, both in-class and remote students need to understand the benefits and the flexibility this mode provides, and this requires some explanation from staff pre-arrival and by instructors once the program starts. In the classes, the students appreciated the

option to choose their mode of learning every class based on their needs. Some students chose to study remotely because of illness, family issues, or vaccination status.

Student collaboration

The third key point to consider is how to create flexibility in class for group work to reduce the stress students faced when trying to schedule meetings outside of class with fellow students in different time zones. Even though the course feedback survey showed that most students were very satisfied with their level of collaboration, one student commented in the course feedback form, "I hope teachers can consider the time difference when arranging group learning activities. Because some students affect group activities because of a time difference." When given more time during class hours to meet to work on group assignments, students were appreciative and also benefitted from the immediate instructor feedback.

Conclusion

In the Fall of 2021, the University of Guelph English Language Programs needed to move from a fully remote learning mode to a Hybrid Flexible mode based on student and programming needs. This move required significant planning, preparation, practice, and collaboration by the instructors and students to meet the course learning outcomes. During the implementation of this new teaching mode, both instructors and students experienced benefits and challenges. Because of the challenges of the pandemic, it was necessary to experiment with more flexible and adaptive modes for English language teaching. In the future, the skills the instructors have acquired in this Hybrid Flexible mode of teaching will contribute to future innovation in the program's offerings.

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iTEP International

By Lorena Chatwell, Canada & Brazil

iTEP International is thrilled to announce its new membership and webinar sponsor partnership with TESL Ontario. Our iTEP Canada team looks forward to meeting members of the TESL Ontario community and continuing to service and support international students and educational professionals in Canada. Learn more about iTEP and our exams at: https://www.itepexam.com/about-itep/.

Who is iTEP International?

iTEP International is a Los Angeles, California-based company that provides English testing solutions to the international education community. In 2008, iTEP created a fully Internet-based all-skills English language assessment tool, the iTEP Academic-Plus exam. It was the first time that non-native English speakers could securely assess their English language fluency online and on-demand.

Since then, iTEP and its team of linguists and ESL specialists have continued to develop innovative English testing solutions for all phases of the international student evaluation experience, including test prep, pre-arrival, admissions, and placement. iTEP partners with universities, colleges, K-12 schools, and language schools all around the world to provide flexible English testing. See iTEP's full range of products at https://www.itepexam.com/products/.

Our services offer customizable exams that can be tailored to fit the needs of our clients, concise exams that can be completed in 90 minutes or less, superior customer service, 24/7 testing availability, 24-hour grading by highly qualified ESL professionals, delivered on a highly secure platform. Since 2008, iTEP has helped hundreds of schools around the world find testing solutions that suit their needs including Sheridan College and the Niagara Christian Collegiate. Read more about schools iTEP has helped at https://www.itepexam.com/about-itep/itep-news/.

Examples of iTEP English language testing solutions in Canada

In 2020, iTEP helped Sheridan College find a new testing solution when the Covid-19 pandemic made Sheridan College's paper-based proficiency test unsafe for students to take at their Ontario campus. The school needed an online test that was securely monitored and brief enough for students to take during a

single session. The iTEP Snapshot exam provided the answer with safe, accurate, and quick testing. The exam offered a turnkey solution with a 60-minute assessment that covered Grammar, Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. It was available on-demand and delivered results 24 hours or less, graded by certified ESL professionals. The iTEP Snapshot exam scores also matched the school's tiered ESL program for easy placement. The smooth and reliable testing provided through iTEP Snapshot was essential for the continued success of Sheridan College's ESL program.

Read the full story of how Sheridan College found their iTEP solution at https://www.itepexam.com/itep-case-study-pre-arrival-testing/.

In 2013, iTEP provided Niagara Christian Collegiate (NCC), a private boarding school in Ontario, Canada, a fast, flexible, and reliable exam when the school's previous "pen and paper" exam was no longer available. NCC needed an exam that could be modified to their needs, provide detailed result, and could be taken without scheduling. The iTEP SLATE-Plus met all these requirements. iTEP SLATE's 24/7 availability allowed NCC to test students as they arrived on campus for first time placement or skills reassessment. The fast, comprehensive results provided NCC staff insights into key areas where students needed more development. iTEP SLATE results also help students and student counselors discuss course selection. The exam results were easy to manage and highly shareable, so test administrators could send them to parents, students, student counselors, and ESL teachers for consultation. Read about the NCC's full iTEP experience in their Q&A interview at: https://www.itepexam.com/niagara-christian-collegiate-adopts-itep-tests/.

Since 2008, iTEP has worked with middle/high schools, universities and colleges, agencies, and language schools in countries around the world to create secure, affordable, on-demand testing for all. Find out more about our Canadian services on our new page for all things iTEP in Canada: https://www.itepexam.com/itep-canada/. You can also meet our outstanding iTEP Canada team at one of the several upcoming conferences we will be attending throughout Canada, including the CAPS-I Conference, the TESL Ontario Conference, the CBIE Conference, and the Languages Canada Conference next year. We hope to see you there!

Find out more about what is happening at iTEP on any of our social pages: LinkedIn (https://www.linkedin.com/company/itep-international/), Twitter (https://twitter.com/itep_exam), or Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/iTEPSLATE/).

If you are an institution looking for testing solutions, contact us to learn more:
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An ESL immigrant teacher's insight into languages

By Lana F. Zeaiter, McGill University, Canada

As a recent immigrant to Canada, I involuntarily find myself in *between-situations*, driven by a set of choices that diverge me away while preserving bits and pieces of my natural *habitus* (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). As a native speaker of Arabic and an ESL teacher who mainly spoke English and French back home, I never realized how liberating it is to be given the choice to use Arabic, my mother tongue, until that choice was no longer an option. When I was still in Lebanon, I barely used Arabic, except with family and friends. Despite being one of the most complex languages to learn globally (Wahba et al., 2014), speaking Arabic is considered unprestigious in Lebanon. The Lebanese context clearly distinguishes between standard and prestigious languages. Though these terms are often used interchangeably, especially in dominant languages such as English and French (Milroy & Milroy, 2012), this is not the case with Arabic in Lebanon (Abdel-Jawad, 2017; Ibrahim, 1986).

First, it is essential to understand Lebanon's linguistic landscape. Lebanon is a small country in the Middle East whose official language is Arabic. There are two variations of Arabic in Lebanon, known as Modern Standard Arabic and Lebanese dialect. And within the Lebanese dialect, six regional registers and about ten sub-regional dialects depending on the geographical region involved (Al-Batal, 2013; Hout, 2017; Ibrahim, 2009). That is a total of one language, two dialects, and sixteen registers. Western powers have always been very much politically and socially involved in Lebanon. After World War I, Christians of Lebanon, mainly Maronites, favored the placement of Lebanon under a French military administration, whereas Muslims supported a British mandate (Salibi, 1990). The endemic debate resulted in France holding the mandate from 1920-1943. The French mandate has had a significant impact on the small country of 18 religious sects. At the beginning of the 19th century, Catholic and Protestant missionaries founded schools and universities to teach western languages to Lebanese youth (Baladi, 2018).

Consequently, the educational system in Lebanon heavily relies on a second language (mainly English and French), with Arabic only used to teach social studies and Arabic language classes (Bacha & Bahous, 2011). Yet, discrepancies between the quality of education and students are prevalent, especially between private and public schools, and urban and rural schools (Baytiyeh, 2017). Moreover, national, and international

companies in Lebanon also use foreign languages in their professional correspondence (reports, emails, presentations). Additonally, given the ongoing deteriorating economic, social, and political situation in Lebanon, Lebanese youth have always considered pursuing their studies in Europe or North America or finding a job abroad, mainly in the Gulf. The different options mentioned above all share knowledge of English and French as a requirement.

Among the numerous lessons my new immigrant identity and professional experience have taught me, one remains the most valuable. There is more to language than the practical communicative use of words. The system, including people, always used the languages I speak as markers of my identity. In Lebanon, as a holder of a French Baccalaureate, I was always labeled as "French-educated" even though I learned both French and English simultaneously from a young age, and I completed both my undergraduate and graduate studies in English at an American affiliated institution. My choice of career did not make things easier. As an ESL teacher, my diverse linguistic repertoire was often used as a pretext for marginalization instead of being considered an asset. The system continuously undermined my language and teaching skills in favor of my *English-educated* colleagues. The current educational system adopts a monolingual approach to language education in which the language of instruction is always the target language, and native-speakerism is the objective. It is deeply rooted in monolingualism that I had to stick to the target language in class and one language variation (which I honestly was not always familiar with). When I tried to express my students' concerns and mine to the concerned policymakers and stakeholders, they would tell me I am lenient and urged me to consider my students' linguistic and cultural challenges as a lack of effort. I had to watch my students struggle with learning English when it could have been a much more enjoyable experience. I will admit that I still secretly prioritized students' practicalities, including resorting to their diverse linguistic repertoire, yet I never reported it.

Growing up in the city, I had attended a prestigious American school where the use of Arabic (which I was very good at, by the way) was considered outdated. I also lived and worked for almost four years and had family members in a village in the South of Lebanon where foreign languages were deemed pretentious. So, by the age of 28, people, including the system, judged me professionally less competent than my peers because I received my primary education in French. In addition, they portrayed me as *uncool* because I frequently used Arabic in my interactions with people. Finally, they considered me showy because I also used English and French when I could not find a word in Arabic. So, I was all three, all at once, depending on my audience.

Then I immigrated to Canada, where I finally thought things would be easier because I am fluent in both the country's official languages. Well, guess what? I was wrong. People tell me my French is *different*, which

is true. I use English more frequently, which has been working so far, albeit with a Lebanese accent. But I can no longer use Arabic in my daily interactions with people. I miss it. I miss who I am when I can express myself freely in Arabic. I miss always finding a way to express my ideas even if I cannot find the exact word for it. I miss switching between Modern Standard Arabic, Lebanese dialect, Beiruti, and Southern registers. I miss who I am with Arabic. It is most frustrating during the second half of the day. There is a 7-hour time difference between Montreal and Lebanon, so after 5pm local time, everyone I know back home is probably asleep, and their social media accounts are inactive. Arabic is asleep. There is more to language than the practical use of words. There is more to language than communication. Within language, there is a life of our own. There are memories. There are feelings. And most of all, there is nostalgia. Language triggers nostalgia.

I do not intend this article to be a personal essay, but I believe it is crucial to build on personal experiences to enhance our professional skills. Not only that, but I am also sure some of my experiences are common to other teachers as well. I share below some of the critical beliefs that drive my professional practices:

Pronunciation and accent are two different notions

I recently attended a CEFR teacher education workshop delivered by Dr. Enrica Piccardo (2021). During the seminar, Dr. Piccardo spoke about embracing students' different accents. However, she also explained how this would not interfere with teaching correct pronunciation. So, I asked her: "As an ESL teacher, how do I differentiate between accent and mispronunciation?" And she answered plainly that pronunciation is technical while accent is personal; it reflects one's identity. But what does that mean, and how do we translate this into practice? The answer is simple. Pronunciation deals with the correct articulation of letters and the production of sounds. As long as your students correctly associate a letter to its standard sound, then that is correct pronunciation; whatever particular feature sounds they add, that is their accent. So, accept it and embrace it.

Aim for intelligibility, not *native-speakerism*

As a teacher, you teach a language so that your students can use it to communicate. If they can communicate, thus make meaning, then the purpose of language is attained. Education aims to improve the making meaning process, yet advancing a conformity model by which all students need to abide is not the answer. This conformity model not only favors languages over others but also favors variations of the same language.

Provide opportunities for linguistic exchange

There is a common misconception about addressing multilingualism in a class by allowing the use of different languages. Some argue that this linguistic diversity limits the use of the target language. Based on my experience both as a student and teacher, this claim is inaccurate. Students resort to other languages, through translation, for example, to facilitate their understanding of the target language. In other words, explaining a word in a language the students are familiar with will help them easily retain the word in the target language. The objective will remain the target language. It is the process that is evolving.

Provide opportunities for cultural exchange

The latter does not only refer to students of different nationalities. Students of the same background can also have cultural differences that are worth sharing in class. For example, during my years of experience in Lebanon, my undergraduate students were born and raised in Lebanon. Yet, they still had distinct cultural characteristics (i.e., family traditions, regional differences). It is also important to note that, cultural awareness increases students' cultural understanding of words, thus their contextual meaning.

Our personal experiences expand our views of language and consequently shape our professional practices as teachers. My experiences as a student, teacher, and immigrant have all impacted my identity, be it the identity I choose for myself, or the identity others decide for me. The languages I speak *labeled* me. I was once an uncool city girl, then an arrogant suburbanite, then a less-competent English teacher, then an immigrant. I am a proud immigrant, but the term immigrant is often used to refer to *the outsider*. Instead of being considered an asset, my linguistic repertoire has been used as a pretext for marginalization. It all led me to a sincere and critical introspection of why I chose education in the first place. It made me reconsider my passion for teaching. I always knew I wanted to be a teacher. As a young girl, I had imaginary classrooms and made-up exams. I would take them all, fail some, and ace the others. Then as I grew older, I grew fonder of teaching, of the unimaginable influence that teachers have on students. I did succumb to the discriminatory monolingual and monocultural system all my life, not anymore. As a dear professor once said to me, "You can never be neutral as a teacher; you are either with or against the system."

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Critical literacy and counter-narratives: Disrupting power and enhancing inclusivity in the LINC classroom

By Abir Hammoudi, OISE, University of Toronto, Canada

Many immigrants come to Canada not understanding the long and complex history it has with its Indigenous people, colonization, residential school system, and the impact of this on Indigenous communities. As a result, many newcomers learn negative stereotypes about Indigenous people because of their representation in the media and literature. Therefore, there is a pressing need to educate ourselves and Canadian newcomers about the true Canadian history. It is important to examine it from different angles and a "need to learn to read again the exhibition of the world, to see the display of the civilized and the primitive" (Willinsky, 1998, p. 86) as history topics have only ever been taught from one point of view of the majority group. So, critical literacy should be adopted as a tool in LINC classrooms to equip newcomer students with essential skills to be effective citizens in a pluralistic and democratic society.

The need to move beyond Eurocentric narratives

Several researchers argue that the current Canadian educational systems "favor ethnocentric thinking and are positioned in a Eurocentric model" (Smith, 2016, p. 49). Canadian newcomers attend ESL and LINC classes to improve their English language and learn about Canadian culture and history. The main goal of these classes is to help them to settle in Canada and develop skills for interaction in a culturally diverse environment, to enrich and strengthen the social and cultural fabric of Canadian multicultural society. However, examining the curriculum indicates that there is a small part allocated to Indigenous history and the legacy of residential schools. This lack of knowledge may result in developing prejudices against the Indigenous communities. Battiste (2013) argues that educators "must reject the colonial curricula that offer students the fragmented and distorted picture of Indigenous people and offer students a critical perspective of the historical context that created that fragmentation" (p. 186). Most importantly, educators need to make sure to revise the material that mute the voices of the marginalized, combat the single narrative of Canadian history trying to bridge the gap, and provide a space for transformative learning.

In his talk, *Seeing Each Other*, Duncan McCue (2014) criticizes how the Canadian media and literature "has propped up colonialism...reinforcing instead policies about land's dispossession and assimilation which are accepted norms in Canada" highlighting the need to move beyond the same tired narratives. Moreover, the

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Call to Action #93 demanded the federal government to revise the information kit for newcomers to Canada, its citizenship test, and the study guide to reflect a more inclusive history of the diverse Indigenous peoples of Canada including information about the Treaties and the history of residential schools. So, it is clear that there are important procedures to be taken to ensure increasing the diversity of stories and perspectives to include voices from diverse groups in the curriculum. More importantly, educators should be aware of this current issue that has not been resolved yet and try to provide their learners with critical literacy skills to uncover such injustices enabling them to examine, challenge societal norms, and be ready to take stance.

What is a critical literacy approach and why should it be used as a tool to stimulate change in the LINC and citizenship classes?

Critical literacy as a tool to promote social justice

Critical literacy approaches multimodal texts as a tool "for representing and reshaping possible worlds" (Luke & Dolley, 2011, p. 856) providing an avenue for both educators and learners "to inform themselves of injustices in their communities, empower themselves with the knowledge to make decisions, and take action" (Amgott, 2018, p. 329). The functions and goals of critical literacy are most concisely defined by the four dimensions disrupting the commonplace, interrogating multiple viewpoints, focusing on sociopolitical issues, and taking action to promote social justice (Lewison et al., 2002). By adopting this approach in the LINC classroom, learners can examine human rights issues and recognize forms of discrimination while studying Canadian history and culture. David Austin (2010) challenges the "official narratives that Canada tells itself about its history and identity" as they "facilitate the contemporary exercise of power" (p. 1). So, it is very important for educators who teach Canadian history and culture to make learning real and examine the information, view it with a critical lens, evaluate it from multiple perspectives, and connect the new information to their learners' lives. These measures are necessary as Powell (1999) suggests to "enhance our capacity for altruism" when they are used "as a means for seeing the world differently—so that we might begin to construct a more humane and compassionate society" (p. 20). By moving beyond the Eurocentric narratives, learners will not only become aware of the true history, but they will be able to read it from the point of view of the marginalized groups and be ready to take part against inequalities and prejudices.

I dig deeper into this omission in the curriculum by questioning what newcomer students across LINC and Citizenship classes already know about Treaties and residential schools and how educators are tackling the topic in their classrooms. It is also worthwhile to examine what sources influence this ongoing gap in understanding, as well as teachers' mindsets and alternative resources that can equip students with tools to evaluate bias and take action.

Questions to ponder:

1. What stories are educators drawing on as they engage on citizenship or Canadian history education?
2. Why are some narratives more widely used than others?
3. What is behind the misrepresentation of Indigenous people in Canadian history?
4. Are we willing to do anything regarding the omission of the residential schools and the Treaty in the citizenship tool kit and LINC curriculum?
5. How can Indigenous voices be used in the classroom to drive change?
6. How can we increase awareness of Indigenous histories, cultures, and perspectives in our classrooms?
7. How do we ensure that Indigenous perspectives are embedded in our lessons?
8. Do we actually facilitate the Truth and Reconciliation when we teach Canadian history?

Counter-narratives as a tool to disrupt power and give voice

To appeal to diverse learners and fit current and local contexts, there is a need to modify the current resources available to adult newcomer students to include multimodal materials that engage Truth and Reconciliation education in depth. Alternative resources that provide diverse narratives to evaluate and enhance stories can be included in the citizenship and LINC curricula. These texts that aim to question power and authority will help confront "the hidden standards of racism, colonialism, and cultural and linguistic imperialism in the modern curriculum" as well as to uncover "the line between truth and propaganda" (Battiste, 2013, p. 29). Opening space for counter-narratives can be a promising tool to ensure educational equity in our diverse classrooms and schools. Counter-storytelling is seen by many as "means of exposing and critiquing normalized dialogues that perpetuate racial stereotypes" (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004, p. 27). These counter-narratives are proposed as a method for revealing, analyzing, and challenging single stories working as a powerful source for multiple perspectives and challenging misrepresentation and stereotypes.

Newcomer students need to know how to critically evaluate texts and media not assuming the author's viewpoint is both accurate and equitable because the common practice of not questioning the authors' intentions can unconsciously strengthen stereotypes and cultural gaps. For instance, *Discover Canada* study guide (2012) prepares newcomers for the citizenship test and heavily focuses on the positive encounter between the Europeans and the Indigenous ignoring the truth of colonization and its legacy where they are taught that "Aboriginals and Europeans formed strong economic, religious and military bonds in the first 200 years of coexistence which laid the foundations of Canada" (p. 14). It is a narrative that fails to educate newcomers on the truthful historical past of oppression and the horrors of residential schools. It is obvious that the citizenship curriculum should be changed similarly to the Canadian Citizenship Oath that has been modified recently to recognize Indigenous rights. On June 21, 2021, Canada's Oath had been updated in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action. The new Oath includes Indigenous,

Inuit, and Métis rights and will help new Canadians better understand the role of Indigenous peoples, the ongoing impact of colonialism and residential schools, and the collective obligation to uphold the treaties (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2021).

LINC resources that can aid diversity and inclusivity

Adichie's TED Talk

Adichie's (2009) talk *The danger of a single story* can be used to help newcomer learners understand the danger of single stories. It encompasses all elements of critical literacy, helps students to interrogate societal issues, and encourages multiple perspectives to critique the structures that serve as norms. Also, it can help them have an increasing awareness of systems of power and oppression, to recognize and challenge deficit perspectives of peoples and cultures as there is no one story. Adichie highlights how stories about peoples and places are tools by those with power control; "stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair the broken dignity" (Adichie, 2009). She stresses the importance of telling many stories in many different voices to ensure that we get at the complexity and diversity of people's experiences. "Start the story with the arrows of the Native Americans, and not with the arrival of the British, and you have an entirely different story" (Adichi, 2009). It is very important to introduce our students to texts that require them to confront and reveal any biases in their lived experiences and communities by screening texts carefully and selecting those that merit inclusion.

Thomas King's *I'm not the Indian you had in mind*

Another resource that can be used to challenge the stereotypical portrayal of First Nations is the short film by Thomas King: *I'm not the Indian you had in mind*. This video encourages the viewers to examine the Canadian identity, culture, and perceptions of Indigenous peoples. It encourages viewers to investigate the impact of the one-dimensional media representations in shaping our perspectives of others. It also helps students think about the relationship between political policy and cultural representations, and more importantly, the role that colonialism plays in the construction and promotion of such stereotypes.

The Indigenous perspective guide

For a more comprehensive understanding of Canada's history, it is important to include Indigenous perspectives when teaching Canadian history and the nation creation. *The Indigenous perspective guide* aims to engage students in thinking critically about our historical narratives and help them consider how both individual and collective worldviews form and are shaped by history. It will help Canadian newcomers

develop awareness of the legacy of colonialism and the repressive policies to which Indigenous communities have been subjected, the contributions of Indigenous people, and to stand against any prejudice and ignorance.

Six String Nation

The Six String Nation project can help newcomers understand the true Canadian history and identity as it reflects on different stories and multiple backgrounds and perspectives. It can foster a safe, inclusive, and transformative learning environment as it embodies the countless stories of a truly diverse Canada. The goal of the creation of Six String Nation was to present "a talking stick for all who wished to share their story and a common touchstone for a complex polity…It has been part of Canada Day festivities…It has also insistently told the story of residential schools and other abuses of indigenous people by the Canadian system and I have always believed that it could hold those two identities" (Taylor, 2021). Bringing the story of creating a single object (a guitar) from significant materials that are gathered from different cultures, communities, characters, and events to represent the nation can give students opportunities to broaden their views and develop their self-identities in positive ways.

Predicted outcomes

These four resources, among others, can support facilitating truth and reconciliation by presenting diverse valued perspectives that make up our history and nation. In addition, these materials can open room for a more diverse and inclusive environment by giving voice to the marginalized groups and questioning history texts by providing multiple perspectives.

Developing active and critical citizens

By bringing diverse voices into the LINC classroom, Indigenous stories become real, and newcomers can gain awareness about the Indigenous realities and avoid the traditional societal prejudice affecting the Canadian society. This sort of critical teaching and learning within the citizenship curriculum will allow newcomers to voice their concerns while opening new avenues for them to connect to their personal experiences and prepare them to be critical and active citizens. Besides helping students acquire citizenship skills, these resources support the development of critical skills such as respecting and considering others' perspectives, highlighting the importance of providing students with opportunities to explore the depth and diverse experiences of Indigenous peoples in our land. As well, they examine the legacy and consequences of colonialism and the repressive policies to which Indigenous peoples have been subjected. They will act as a tool to critique society and attempt to make positive change by helping both educators and learners to understand the complexity of cultural, social, and personal differences that influence our understanding of social justice issues.

Teaching an accurate and complete history

We always need to understand the value of analyzing instructional materials as some instructors may have never questioned the validity of teaching standards of the curriculum before. Educators should have a social and moral responsibility to teach students an accurate and more complete history of Indigenous peoples to help them develop an awareness of biases and inspire them to act against injustices. This will help "identify the holes in the story of our country and note what has been left out. This is necessary, not to lay blame, but to repair the story" (Donald, 2010, pp. 2–3). Educators will greatly benefit understanding the importance of presenting students with multiple viewpoints of content, allowing them to build an understanding of the history of Indigenous peoples and examine how colonialism has and continues to impact them. There is a need to be sure that our curriculum changes to reflect more dialogue, courtesy, and diversity of viewpoints as newcomers account for a large portion of Canada's population.

Resisting discrimination and racism

Indigenous communities' experiences with assimilation, discrimination, and racism have lasting impact on their health and well-being. There are assimilative pressures practiced on these groups by the dominant society to forget one's roots, voice, and true identity. Counter-narratives should be used when teaching newcomers to disrupt racialized violence and exclusions that occur daily in our society. Dominant narratives of Canadian history can be retold by educators by using diverse texts that open dialogue for historical thinking. It will help open our eyes to the issue of how some cultures are more likely to experience systemic racism which hinders their integration into Canadian society.

Conclusion

The critical literacy approach and counter-narratives would be particularly useful in contemporary multicultural classrooms where educators will be able to examine societal problems and eventually change learning into tangible movements to expose and address inequalities (Amgott, 2018). Then, newcomer students from different cultural backgrounds can share their personal experiences, histories, and have a voice against any misrepresentation while learning the true history of Canada and its diverse cultures. This article is a call to my colleagues in the field to have the potential to help make Truth and Reconciliation a reality and to create a fairer and more inclusive nation by questioning why years of teaching Canadian history from one viewpoint was ever considered to be a valid form of instruction. Thus, educators not only present the role of rights and resistance in shaping our history but provide models of informed civic engagement. This requires designing classroom materials that help students interrogate societal issues and encourage considering multiple perspectives to critique the structures that serve as norms. Also, instructors

have the power to design and create the capacity in learners to see the world broadly by raising awareness that differences in opinions and cultures are accepted and encouraged in and beyond the classroom. By adopting critical literacy as a tool to enable students to gain power, to have a voice against stereotypes and misconceptions, to share their histories and their stories, educators can help learners create social awareness and question injustices and systems of power and oppression.

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The use of technology in the ESL classroom:
A discussion

By Joanne Jalbert, Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board, Canada

Abstract

Over the last 20 years, technology has become a leading force in education and has consequently changed not only the resources available in the ESL classroom, but also impacted the types of decisions that teachers face when applying technology to daily lessons. Under discussion will be the results of how technology has impacted learner outcomes to date, what responsibilities school systems have to support teachers and learners in technological adoption, how and when (and when not) teachers should use different devices in the classroom, as well as a recommendation of resources to help teachers get started. Along the way, the paper will discuss some best practices, and why it is imperative that ESL learners develop technological proficiency. Technology should be embraced, without the risk of replacing traditional means of lesson delivery and recording.

Technology has been the dominant force in the last twenty years when it comes to change (Qureshi, 2020). Every industry has witnessed change thanks to this digital transformation, from increased speed, power, or velocity. As an example, fashion retailer, Zara, replaces three quarters of a store's merchandise every month thanks in part to the speed of technology, enabling the company to respond quickly to consumers' whims (Mukherjee, 2020). It would be difficult in past years for any retailer to achieve such efficient control over the creation, production, and distribution processes without technology, specifically when it comes to what is produced, as well as in the way things are sourced, designed, and delivered.

Technology has remained the most promising factor in recent years in any industry when it comes to supporting organizations in pursuit of optimal results. Like any force in nature, however, technology has not

been an equal playing field for all and has affected industries differently as well as benefited players within those industries differently. Productivity gains have varied widely, too, where the biggest winners have been those poised on the forefront of technological innovation (Qureshi, 2020).

Notwithstanding, the ESL industry is conducive to technological innovation because it is in the business of information dissemination, a process that can be supported by gadgets and devices. Over the years, I have witnessed the continued and growing impact that technology has had on the ESL industry. When I started teaching in the early 2000s, technology was not advanced enough to support much in the way of online applications and content. Currently, it is relatively simple to find ESL worksheets, audio-visual media, and interactive content online, not to mention the myriad offerings of full-scale English content producers. ESL book publishers have similarly embraced technology, often adding free downloadable materials like teacher's guides, audio or visual components to their websites to support teachers, and developing companion sites for student practice. For those ESL teachers who have been around for a while, it was not that long ago that cassette tapes were packaged at the back of textbooks.

Technological innovation in the way of devices has permeated the broader education industry, as it has in the ESL classroom where many devices like data projectors, smartboards, laptops, and tablets are now commonplace. Laptops and tablets have not always been the standard, however, and there have been some interesting ways technology has been integrated into the ESL classroom of yesteryears. A suitable example is in South Korea, a country which has proven over the years to be an early adopter of technology due to the small size of the nation, where natural resources are scarce, and innovation is crucial to retaining a competitive international advantage in business and trade. During my years teaching English in Korea, I witnessed some efforts to augment the classroom experience through the use of creative applications of technology.

In 2010, the Korean government launched a pilot project to introduce a robot, nicknamed EngKey (short for English Jockey) into select public elementary school ESL classrooms. Primarily geared for smaller school districts that were unable to attract English-speaking teachers, the robots were fitted with a screen in place of a face, which would in turn broadcast the face of a live English teacher who would be working remotely from another country. This allowed for real-time interaction between robots and learners. As a secondary function, EngKey offered an offline application by using voice-recognition technology to enable learners to practice their English pronunciation.

The robots were a masterful way to solve a practical staffing problem, and it was emphasized at the time that the robots were never designed to replace a live teacher in the classroom. South Korea's early efforts to support English learning were laudable, in that the country applied new technologies to address an existing

problem. In fact, South Korea's legacy of adopting early technologies primed the country for their leading role it holds today in innovation, where it remains highly competitive in the technological sector.

This example of introducing robot technology in classrooms shows that educational settings have needs that technological innovation can satisfy, but I think we can agree that simply having devices in the classroom is not enough to improve scores, nudge motivation nor replace a human teacher. Some important questions teachers may ponder are, perhaps, despite all of these *new* and *improved* classroom tools, have technological improvements in the classroom yielded richer results among our learners? It is equally important to ask: Are some forms of technological media more conducive to the ESL classroom than others?

Technology is one way that school boards and ESL teaching providers remain competitive, as well as relevant. ESL learning providers in Canada have pressure to respond to the increased expectations of the market (our learners), which require significant investment and a redirection of resources. It is, therefore, essential to know to what degree these investments in technology have not only had on student learning outcomes to date, but also on the sensibleness of the contributions of all stakeholders involved.

The truth is, however, that success is not a term that can be used to describe the results of attempts to integrate gadgets into the language classroom thus far. An article released in 2020 by McKinsey & Company outlined their general findings from a global study conducted to find out what connection exists between technology and student learning outcomes. It may be surprising to hear that when it comes to teaching reading, it turns out that personal tablets detracted from learning progress (Bryant et al., 2020). Data suggests that when tablets were used to aid in reading, students were set back by about half of a year. Likewise, the study also showed that laptops provided no significant improvement on learning outcomes when it came to reading.

One possible explanation for these sullen results may be that in order to benefit from the use of a technological device, one has to know how to use it first. It is the classic case of someone trying to write an essay on a laptop. If the writer has little experience in word processing and typing on a keyboard, it is likely that a good deal of energy will be spent on the mechanics of typing, while redirecting energy away from the content of the essay. It follows then that, time should be allocated on familiarizing students with the functions of personal devices like tablets and laptops, before the devices are used to achieve any specific learning goal. Going forward, school systems should also be responsible for developing programming that supports learners in gaining the necessary skills that will be needed in the high-tech classroom setting of our present and future.

The McKinsey & Company study also looked at how effective were teacher-manipulated technologies, and the results were mixed. Interestingly, data projectors increased learners' outcomes, whereas interactive whiteboards showed no significant impact (Bryant et al., 2020).

The aforementioned study was designed to show correlation, however, and not causality. In other words, there were no suggestions given for why, say, data projectors are more effective than interactive whiteboards in a classroom when learning outcomes are concerned. Causality, however, may be ascribed as to why teacher-driven technologies fared better than student-driven ones like tablets: When teachers control the technological devices, learner outcomes are better and that's likely because teachers are more proficient in manipulating the devices. It is likely that teachers, by sheer nature of the job and years of education, have been exposed to devices longer than some of our learners. This de facto technological training may be responsible for the comparative success of teaching with the aid of a data projector, versus, say, a student-driven tool like a laptop. Therefore, we can assume that the lack of success in learning by way of a device is not due entirely to the inherent deficiency of the laptop as a learning tool nor the inflexibility in adaptation of the learner using it, success simply comes down to teachers having higher proficiency and longer prior exposure to devices.

This point leads to a second principle: Technology must be used correctly in order for it to be effective (Bryant et al., 2020). As common sense as this is, this principle prevails in a variety of ways when it comes to the ESL classroom. Some decisions that teachers make regularly when it comes to using technology are: What software or applications should I use? Also, what is the optimal device to use for the task at hand? Teachers are put in a position to match the use of technology with the environment and context. Without targeted teacher training, intuition can only go so far when it comes to answering these questions.

Teachers should select the use of different devices to suit learners' needs, and the rationale for selection relies on a teacher's experience, knowledge, and intuition. School systems should recognize that teacher training is imperative if technology is to be used fruitfully. What is equally important and possibly overlooked, is the need to introduce and train learners, too, on how to use personal devices such as laptops or tablets in order for these devices to be beneficial.

There were further revelations from the McKinsey and Company study that should be mentioned here. ESL classrooms vary from conventional, mainstream classrooms due in part to whom we serve; that is, ESL learners typically come from overseas locales, and as a result, learners' knowledge and experience in using devices varies wildly. An astonishing find of the study, however, was when literacy and language arts students coming from outside of North America <u>did not</u> use technology at all in the classroom, they ended up with better learning outcomes than students who did use some technology (Bryant et al., 2020). In other

words, the average learner did not benefit from using devices in the classroom. In fact, optimal time on a device to improve literacy and language skills was determined by the study to be effectively zero minutes. As discussed already, proficiency with technology must precede the practical use of technology when using it to complete a task. And for most countries—where a good deal of ESL students hail from—technology is not always supported, and therefore, they may lack working proficiency.

So, what is the takeaway?

The ultimate question to address here is whether technology has a place in the ESL classroom. As we saw earlier, South Korea implemented the Engkey robot to solve a problem that arose from having a limited pool of available teachers. Solving problems is a good reason for using technology. Another way that technology can serve in the classroom is by enhancing the experience while securing better outcomes. Technology can address this goal, too. Despite the revealing results of the McKinsley and Company study in how devices do not always contribute to learners' improved performance, it is important to recognize that the results reflect the use of technology up to the present time, but do not necessary reflect the future. A mirror study conducted in 10 years' time may yield favourable conclusions, that is, once devices have found an enduring effective use and place in ESL learning.

At this point, based on the mixed results that gadgets have in the classroom, it may seem logical to eschew technology in favour of traditional means of learning, by way of old-fashioned books, paper, and pencils. It is important to note here that although there will always be skeptical teachers who maintain membership in the paper-and-pencil club, these teachers are not entirely wrong in putting their faith in comparatively traditional means of recording. A study published in *Frontiers in Psychology* showed that handwriting contributes to better reading development, more efficient transfer of information from short-term to long-term memory, and stronger retention (Zwaagstra, 2021). This is because handwriting produces more brain activity than do typing or clicking a mouse, which ultimately helps to engage the brain in more ways. Typing on a keyboard does not seem to be as effective as handwriting when it comes to learning and holding things in one's memory. What is more, when it comes to note-taking, laptops left learners with a shallower understanding of material than if they had penned the notes by hand. A good rule of thumb: The use of devices should complement the existing media of learning, not *replace* them. The research does not support uprooting pen-and-paper work entirely in favour of mice and touchscreens. This is positive news for teachers that are fond of dictations and notetaking.

Another useful rule regardless of what kind of media is used to teach, is that we have to look at the process of teaching, rather than the aids, as a guide to using technology successfully. *What matters more than*

which technologies we use is whether the instructor has agency over the process. In other words, when it comes to developed educational systems such as the ones we have in Canada, de-centralized power and higher authority granted to teachers to decide which technologies to use and when to use them, appears to be a better practice to integrate devices into the classroom (Barber et al., 2010).

Another consideration is the urgency by which ESL learning providers should address the training of ESL learners with technologies. ESL learners are often at a disadvantage in their new country because they may lack the language skills necessary to compete in the job market. Learners may not have had exposure to up-to-date technologies in their home countries in large part to under-developed local infrastructures (Wi-Fi, etc.). Technological skills serve as a way to attempt to equalize opportunities for English language learners in their new lands when it comes to future employment and academic opportunities (Altavilla, 2020).

School systems should give equal priority to offering ESL instructors the necessary training and professional development available to gain experience in using technology specifically in the ESL classroom, as attempts to utilize gadgets in-class remain, until now, largely untested and unproven in terms of their effectiveness (Altavilla, 2020). Teachers need guidance when it comes to addressing which applications are useful for improving which skill, the appropriate level for different software applications, as well as which devices are helpful with different skills. It is likely that as technological proficiency improves at the teacher and student levels, developing applications and software are likely to become more sophisticated and focused when it comes to addressing the needs of ESL instruction. As technology continues its evolution in sophistication, we should see learner outcomes improve. It holds then, that, improved student outcomes in the future are dependent on the training and proficient use of technology in today's classrooms. School systems need to communicate to teachers the importance of teaching technological literacy in the classroom, as it not only impacts the student's learning success in the classroom but is also directly applicable to their future success in the job market.

An additional consideration, when it comes to deciding when and how technology should be used in the classroom, is when it comes to positioning it in our post-pandemic world. Recently, as one my children was completing their nightly online homework assignments, she stated she wished her teacher gave homework on paper. This similar sentiment was echoed when I surveyed my class at the beginning of the school year when I asked if they preferred online classes or in-person classes. The consensus was in-school instruction was the preferred means of delivery. Anecdotal as these examples are, they do hold some logic. Is it possible that some students are experiencing post-pandemic technological burnout? Is it advisable to take the foot off of the tech pedal for a while?

So where do we go from here? What are first steps that instructors can take to attempt to learn how to proficiently implement the use of devices in the ESL classroom? The Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISS of BC) had developed online resources to help address the challenges that newcomers may face when it comes to digital literacy (https://digital-literacy.issbc.org/). The site offers a needs assessment, as well as modules that teachers can work through with their students. These modules target keyboarding skills, like using the Shift key, basic computer skills like double-clicking on a mouse or dragging a folder, as well as Internet and email protocol and conventions. The teacher's section offers excellent resources graded by CLB level (up to CLB 6), including lesson plans and worksheets, all designed in-line with PBLA directives. A students' section offers simple, multimedia resources to address the same skills listed above.

As this discussion comes to a close, a macro observation should be included here: When it comes to achieving success in the classroom with or without gadgets, learner outcomes are directly tied to the quality of the instruction, and the quality of the instruction is only as good as the quality of the teacher's competency as an educator (Barber et al., 2007). Improvements in technology in the classroom cannot have a positive impact on learner outcomes if teachers do not possess first the skills needed to offer competent instruction. Nonetheless, I would wager that as technology continues to become more intuitive, as more research goes into how technology can be used effectively for language learning, and when both teacher and student training on devices catch up, we should see improved productivity and gains. Technology is a force that needs to be reckoned with as we navigate unknown waters, as it is here to stay. As professionals in our industry striving for a common goal, it is up to us to ensure that technology is a resource and force that is not left untapped.

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Joanne Jalbert, MBA, OCELT, spent 15 years working in South Korea's ESL industry, from inside the classroom, to international marketing and sales in book publishing, as well as developing content for ESL textbooks. The business has taken her to four continents, but she currently counts Hamilton, ON as her home where she works in standardized testing and as an ESL instructor at St. Charles, HWCDSB.

The emotional challenges of adult learners of English as a second language: A teacher's reflection on a student's temper tantrum

By Heather Slepchik Zeligman, Atlanta, USA

This essay will explore how negative emotions of adult ESL learners can lead to educational challenges, and ultimately decrease the quality of their autonomy in their personal lives. By reflecting on and contextualizing a personal experience with an emotional student, I will analyze examples of emotional barriers and discuss how teachers can strive to understand this specific population of learners through awareness of Knowles et al.'s (2015) second andragogical principle, "a deep psychological need to be seen by others and treated by others as being capable of self-direction" (p. 44).

Knowles et al. (2015) note an unfortunately high rate of adults who drop out of learning environments . There are several psychological dynamics at play that can impact this decision, whether the learner is consciously aware of them or not. Specifically, an adult is a unique type of student whose needs and requirements for the relationship between themselves and a teacher, namely a dynamic of recognized independence and autonomy, differ from those of children (p. 44).

The dropout risk for learners within adult education is an important issue to address within Canada due to the growing number of incoming immigrants. Statistics Canada reports that over one million immigrants arrived between 2011–2016, predominantly to English speaking cities such as Toronto and Vancouver (Statistics Canada, 2016b). The percentage of immigrants for whom English is the first language has decreased significantly over time, and currently, approximately half a million newcomers are unable to hold a basic conversation in English (Statistics Canada, 2016a). This poses serious limitations on their own independence and autonomy because of the need to depend on others to achieve personal tasks. The rising rates of immigrants in Canada are a call to action to reduce the threat of student dropout in adult education, ensure high quality learning environments, and to illustrate a clear understanding of their unique educational needs for teachers, curriculum designers, and policy makers.

Learner profile: Adult ESL learners

In an adult ESL classroom, one will find a gathering of individuals whose unique lives have intersected. The group is typically an example of diversity and difference. Many classrooms have a student population that can range by country of origin, culture, gender, sexual orientation, demographics, socioeconomic status, level of education and literacy, political views, and personal interests. The ages can range from 18–80, and sometimes even older. The primary differences between the learners are the stories and reasons why each has enrolled to learn English. Some could be immigrants, refugees of war, business professionals, or curious self-directed learners on temporary student visas. And while these learners vary in significant ways, they commonly share three characteristics. First is the goal of achieving "communicative competence" (Brown, as cited in Richards & Renandya, 2012, p. 13); this means that adult learners are able to independently achieve their needs in authentic and "unrehearsed contexts in the real world" like grocery shopping or seeing a doctor without having to depend on a more fluent English speaker. Secondly, adult ESL learners can experience a barrier to their learning due to emotional factors concerning the "language ego" (Brown, as cited in Richards & Renandya, 2002, p. 12); these learners experience anxiety in the form of "fragility, defensiveness, and a raising of inhibitions" due to the formation of a "second identity" while speaking the new language within the new culture (Brown, as cited in Richards & Renandya, 2002, p. 12). The third characteristic is encompassed in Knowles et al.'s (2015) second andragogical principle: "a deep psychological need to be seen by others and treated by others as being capable of self-direction" (p. 44). This means that making their own informed choices and achieving independent goals are integral parts of how these learners perceive adulthood. While this andragogical principle commonly refers to general adult learners, it applies to ESL learners as well because of their desire for autonomy as found in the journey towards communicative competence. These three characteristics of an adult ESL learner ultimately connect to the way emotions are experienced and can manifest in the classroom in positive or negative ways. If a teacher is informed specifically about the third characteristic, personal and learning challenges of students can hopefully be alleviated.

A personal note

Throughout my career as an ESL instructor, I have had the privilege of working with hundreds of international adult students. Several students were extremely memorable, and I often warmly think about them. However, one particularly unforgettable student was *Joao*, who unfortunately exhibited a series of dramatic emotional outbursts, resulting in my hesitation and eventual refusal to continue as his teacher. I have often pondered about his curious behavior such as what might have been going on in his mind and who exactly he was. While I do not know with certainty the answers to any of these questions, I wish to utilize

this essay as a tool to speculate upon this emotional, confusing, and troubling "critical incident" as a teacher (Flanagan, as cited in Cranton, 1992, p. 158). I strive to use this essay as a learning opportunity to explore a scenario which continues to bother me and examine it through a critical lens of theoretical frameworks.

Joao

Joao was a Portuguese-speaking male from Brazil and approximately age 65. He arrived late on his first day, and upon entering the classroom took a brief pause and glanced over at me with an expressionless face. I did not acknowledge his tardiness, and he was encouraged to find a seat. He chose one in the back corner of the classroom and folded his arms across his chest. The class had already completed its introductions, and I asked if he would tell us his name, which he did begrudgingly. It is common for ESL students to use their phones as digital dictionaries; however, Joao adamantly refused to, stating he had come to learn English, and not how to use his cellphone. I located a Portuguese/English paperback dictionary in the staff room, but Joao continued to protest the use of any aids. He insisted that the teacher should tell him exactly what everything means, and that using a dictionary would be useless. He refused to work with other students in small groups and complained that I was not teaching him anything. He frequently interrupted me, asking me to speak slower, while checking with neighbouring students if they could understand me. He began to mimic my voice, and I explained that he was being disrespectful. This resulted in him glaring, attempts at intimidation, and further escalating verbal outbursts. I wondered if he could be unstable or dangerous. I only knew that his name was Joao and that he was from Brazil. I gave the class some work to do and exited the classroom to communicate to my manager that I felt unsafe. I requested for Joao to work with a different teacher, and the next day he was placed in a different class.

Analysis

The story about my experience with Joao evokes questioning such as why he presented the described behaviour, and what were possible motivating factors that influenced his thoughts and emotions. The following subsections analyze why Joao's perceptions and emotions may have manifested and how they can be contextualized within the theoretical lens of Knowles et al.'s (2015) second andragogical principle.

Self-concept and its construction of what an 'adult' is

Deep within an adult's psyche exists the construct of who they are, and their perception of their place in the world. For a learner, the self-concept is personal, meaningful, and all-encompassing "[...] including our beliefs about our personality traits, physical characteristics, abilities, values, goals, and roles, as well as the knowledge that we exist as individuals" (Jhangiani & Tarry, 2014, p. 113). Knowles et al. (2015) identify the "learners' self-concept" (p. 44) as a particularly crucial component to

an adult's learning process. Symbolically, it holds the knowledge and meaning of what an *adult* is, coupled with the life experiences that have contributed to the construction of one's reality. In a classroom of adult learners, components of each student's self-concept will be specific to their own individual lives, and a teacher may ultimately be unable to realize the intentions and motivations of each learner. Herein lies the space for potential conflicts and misunderstandings: Every student wishes to learn English, but each has arrived with different life stories.

Self-directedness at clash with perceived authority figure

Knowles et al. (2015) state, "[adults] develop a deep psychological need to be seen by others and treated by others as being capable of self-direction. They resent and resist situations in which they feel others are imposing their wills on them" (p. 44). This means that adult learners can experience varying emotions if they perceive (realistically or not) that the teacher is attempting to impose control. Dirkx (2008) recognizes residual feelings or "baggage" (p. 8) from past negative and possibly traumatic experiences in educational settings. A teacher could represent an archetypical figure that symbolizes shame because of a past encounter with someone who cast unfair authority and control. When Joao initially saw me as *the teacher*, it did not matter who I was. I was not *Heather,* I was *Teacher*—the possible construction of something negative, threatening, scary, penalizing, or something else that I could never understand, simply because the construction belonged only to him. In mere moments, his arriving late for class may have produced a trigger, which caused a narrative to play within his mind, all the while due to the "conditioning" (Knowles et al., 2015, p. 44) of his past as a learner, such as in childhood. The arguing was possibly indicative of "a conflict" between a subconscious expectation of a childlike dependency, and Joao's adult "psychological need to be self-directing" (Knowles et al., 2015, p. 44). By mimicking me, his mentality seemingly equated to, *I know you are the teacher, but I am an adult and that means that I don't have to listen to you. I have my own money and I can grab a taxi and leave here anytime I feel like, and maybe never come back. And you can't do a single thing about that.*

Dependency in the language ego and communicative competence

Knowles et al. (2015) state that adult learners "resent and resist situations in which they feel others are imposing their wills on them" (p. 44). This creates an extra challenge for the adult learner who has chosen to learn a second language outside of their home country. In not speaking the language, understanding the new culture, or knowing the route home, every experience and encounter is a risk to their inherently adult psychological need for independence and autonomy. While they were initially self-directed in making the decision to study English, the dynamic crumbles once their choices become limited due to a new language.

The Language Ego (Brown, as cited in Richards & Renandya, 2002, p. 12) is a term that identifies the struggles that shape a second identity for an adult learner. A new person develops, for better or for worse when living adult life anew in an unfamiliar places, language, and cultural norms. The transition and adaptation period of relocating and experiencing a new version of oneself can be profoundly emotional, particularly when the *second self* has experienced confusion and fear in situations where societal norms are unknown. An ESL learner might mourn their *first self*, while realizing that for various logistical reasons they cannot continue to be that version in either country.

If one cannot speak the language, a dependency on others can occur for daily tasks. This dynamic ultimately would cause a clash against the adult learner's desire to be viewed as independent, and is the outcome of minimal "communicative competence" (Brown, as cited in Richards & Renandya, 2002, p. 13). I do not know what Joao's commute to school was like, or if he had successfully located groceries. Perhaps he was already sliding deeper into dependency on others. Or perhaps Joao regressed, as Knowles et al. (2015) describe: "The minute adults walk into an activity labeled 'education,' 'training,' or something synonymous, they hark back to their conditioning in their previous school experience, put on their dunce hats of dependency, fold their arms, sit back, and say 'teach me'" (p. 44). For example, when Joao refused to use the paperback dictionary, perhaps he regressed to a time in his life when he believed that a teacher was all-knowing. Maybe he believed he had entered an optionless dynamic that "emphasizes [the] teacher talking to students, rather than listening to them" (Feinberg, 1999, p. 22). Strikingly like Knowles et al.'s (2015) description, Joao with his arms crossed was adamant that the teacher had all the answers, highlighting his reversion to a time in his life, likely childhood, when he was in a role of "required dependency" in a classroom (Knowles et al., 2015, p. 44).

When change does not occur within oneself

Modern classrooms have changed with the increase of technological integration, ergonomics, and social constructivism. Students might collaborate at tables instead of individually sitting at rows of desks, and classes are held during evenings. Those childhood classmates are now grown adults with diverse and independent lives, and the teacher might not necessarily be the oldest person in the classroom. Dirkx (2008) suggests that the environment for an adult learner can cause an emotional reaction. These emotions can become heightened by the changes that an adult student notices in a learning environment. Applefield et al. (2001) state: "Paradigm shifts bring new perspectives, new conceptualizations and new ways of thinking about a topic, large or small" (p. 35). They further note that paradigm shifts in the field of education have occurred, especially as teaching practices and designed instruction have expanded to constructivism. This means that an adult who is reexperiencing learning particularly "after a long hiatus from school" (Taylor,

2008, p. 18) might feel surprised, if not shocked, upon entering the new learning environment. If once familiar places like classrooms have experienced transformations in ways an adult learner has not, their "frame of reference" is shaken (Taylor, 2008, p. 17). For example, while Joao came across as aggressive and patronizing, it is possible that he experienced an emotional overreaction to the layout of the classroom. Could it have been mind-boggling to see the desks and chairs situated along the perimeter of the classroom, in a half square shape? Perhaps Joao was accustomed to sitting in rowed desks, and he attempted to replicate the rigidity of a more familiar physical space by choosing to sit in the corner as far away as possible from the teacher.

Joao's refusal to use his cellphone as a dictionary also indicated the possible result of a paradigm shift that had not yet impacted him as an adult learner. Profound changes in technology and their integration within educational use have occurred over time. It is possible that adult learners will find the use of it in a classroom to be jarring, especially so if they are unfamiliar with the benefits of its use. Franklin (1990) looks at technology as a "mindset" which can greatly interfere with the adult learner's construction of the usages of technology (p. 3). While Joao demonstrated a stubborn personality trait when he refused to use his dictionary as a cellphone, perhaps his mindset about technology prevented him from willingly considering if a cell phone could truly be used as a dictionary.

What, though, made his reactions so different from the other learners within the same classroom space? Perhaps this question concerning Joao is one that cannot truly be answered, as Brookfield (2009) writes about the blockages and hardships that cause adults to be unable to "escape their own autobiographies" (p. 2620). Each adult learner brings their life stories, positive or negative, into a classroom.

Discussion

Brookfield (1990) describes "hitting bottom" when one recognizes that "things can't get any worse than this" and feels ready to "give up" in response (Cranton, 1992, p. 160). While Kelly (as cited in Cranton, 1992, p. 161) believes that one's experiences result in uniquely personal constructions of reality, I continue to validate my feelings of *threatened* and *unsafe*. I was afraid of Joao, not because of the conflict itself, but because he was larger and taller than me, and it did not seem as if the rest of the class was willing to defend me (and perhaps their English was not strong enough to understand the nuances). Contextually, I was newly pregnant, and the teaching position was not well paid. I felt powerless and dependent on others due to feeling nauseous, tired, and having low energy. Maybe my own childhood cultural influences of mythical figures had "morphed" Joao into the *Big Bad Wolf* who was going to *blow my house down* (Dirkx, 2008, p. 12). I wonder if I might qualify, too, for Knowles et al.'s (2015) "deep psychological need to be seen by others and treated by others as being capable of self-direction" (p. 44). Could there have been aspects in

my leaving the classroom of wanting to "flee" (p. 44) the situation, because of my perception that my own autonomy was being challenged? As I attempt to transform and change myself in hopes of personal growth, I will openly propose this question, irrespective if I am willing to admit (or not) to the answer: Was I wrong that day?

I did not feel driven to take steps to try to understand Joao and work through the conflict. Joao was removed from my class, we did not speak again, and I was relieved that he was no longer my student. I do not regret bringing the situation to my manager, and I suppose he could have refused the student's transfer or asked for an English/Portuguese-speaking staff member to help intervene and encourage the student to apologize. I suspect that Joao did not have closure, and it is unclear if his behaviour repeated the following day with his new teacher or even in other aspects of his personal life. Without any closure, Joao lost out on a learning opportunity to discover how his behaviour could be impacting his learning experiences. In conflicting situations with a learner, Cranton (1992) recommends promptly having a private and direct discussion (p. 183). A meeting instead with myself and an English/Portuguese-speaking staff member could have led Joao and I to better understand each other. Either way, it is possible that Joao would not have wanted to discuss anything. Dirkx (2008) states: "Helping learners understand and make sense of these emotion-laden experiences within the context of the curriculum represents one of the most important and most challenging tasks for adult educators" (p. 9). Yet, perhaps Joao was truly a "problem person" as Cranton (1992, p. 182) states, and that "the educator must not view it as a personal failure […]" She further adds that "there are learners who are dealing with personal issues which cause them to exhibit inappropriate behaviour in the group" (p. 183). With that knowledge, a teacher can choose to look past conflict, and develop strategies through seeking advice from other staff members, or by participating in professional development attempts.

Unless Joao was intentionally vindictive, I imagine that his over-reaction that day was the result of his emotionally negative construction of what a learning environment and a teacher symbolize. While the teacher of the adult learner may be well versed in the practice of andragogical concepts, their knowledge and technique could still remain undetectable to the adult learner due to their preconceived constructions. As a result, "a teacher may precipitate affect-laden memories of earlier instructors or mentors or of one's parents", and "[they] may be the unwitting targets of such feelings" (Dirkx, 2008, p. 10). Sadly, a teacher who is not versed in theories of adult education might take situations of conflict personally and "may react angrily at what they perceive is an attack on them" (Dirkx, 2008, p. 10). This outcome could appear as a repeated pattern of asking additional students to leave over the course of the teaching career, ultimately perpetuating the phenomenon of adults dropping out of educational settings. Adult ESL students who experience challenges in learning situations and decide to leave, may be further driven into dependency and

lack of autonomy as the result of strain on the language ego, decreasing their communicative competence, and ultimately their ability to integrate into greater society. As a result of my subsequent learning about andragogical principles, I could have interpreted Joao differently, and we both could have experienced a different outcome.

Conclusion

This essay has identified how adult ESL students experience learning, and how the impact of negative emotions can impact the learning experience, not only for themselves but for the teacher. Teacher knowledge of the second andragogical principle can aid in understanding the challenges that adult ESL learners experience. In lowering the rate of misunderstandings due to emotionality in a learning environment, perhaps the risk of adult ESL learners choosing to leave learning situations will be reduced, and communicative competence will be better reached.

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Heather Slepchik Zeligman, MEd, was born in Toronto, and currently lives in Atlanta with her husband and children. She entered the field of ESL as a second career, and sees it as her best professional decision. Her research interests include adult education, emotionality within adult educational environments, the interplay of teacher self-regulation and student co-regulation, and GED student success. Her hobbies are researching the genealogy of her family, watching documentaries, and trying new foods.

50TH ANNUAL VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

TESL Ontario 2022 Virtual Conference Program-at-a-Glance

TESL Ontario 2022 Virtual Conference Program-at-a-Glance

		Wednesday, October 26	Thursday, October 27		Friday, October 28
9:00	JOINT PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS' MEETING (9:00AM-11:00AM)	Concurrent Sessions 9:00AM-10:00AM	Concurrent Sessions 9:00AM-10:00AM	PANEL DISCUSSION (9:30AM-11:30AM)	Concurrent Sessions 9:00AM-10:00AM
9:30					
10:00					
10:30		Concurrent Sessions 10:30AM-11:30AM	Keynote 10:30AM-11:30AM		Concurrent Sessions 10:30AM-11:30AM
11:00					
11:30					
12:00		Concurrent Sessions 12:00PM-1:00PM	Concurrent Sessions & Career Booster Forum 12:00PM-1:00PM		Keynote 12:00PM-1:00PM
12:30					
1:00					
1:30		Research Symposium 1:00PM-3:30PM	Concurrent Sessions 1:30PM-2:30PM		Concurrent Sessions 1:30PM-2:30PM
2:00					
2:30					
3:00		Teacher Research Mentorship Roundtables 4:00PM-5:00PM	Concurrent Sessions 3:00PM-4:00PM		Concurrent Sessions 3:00PM-4:00PM
3:30					
4:00					
4:30			Concurrent Sessions 4:30PM-5:30PM		
5:00					
5:30		Annual General Meeting 5:30PM-6:30PM (Members Only)			
6:00			50th Anniversary Celebration 6:00PM-7:30PM		
6:30					
7:00		Welcome & Awards 6:45PM-7:45PM			
7:30					

Note: Thursday, October 27 also includes CAREER FAIR (3:00PM-5:00PM).

TESL Ontario 2022 Virtual Conference Highlights

#CONFERENCEHIGHLIGHTS
PANEL DISCUSSION
FOSTERING PROGRESS. STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS.

#CONFERENCEHIGHLIGHTS
KEYNOTE SPEAKERS
DAILY KEYNOTES

#CONFERENCEHIGHLIGHTS
GIVEAWAYS & PRIZES
WIN SWAG

English Language Learning Magazine
CONTACT
Special Research Symposium Issue
#CONFERENCEHIGHLIGHTS
RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM
NEW ANNUAL ISSUE

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LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
YAN MARKSON, MENTALIST & MAGICIAN

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TESL ONTARIO AWARDS
AWARDS CEREMONY

#CONFERENCEHIGHLIGHTS
SUPPLIER ENGAGEMENT
CONNECT WITH THE TESL COMMUNITY