



ESL Infusion Newsletter

Second edition, February 2005

Greetings!

It is our pleasure to present the second edition of the ESL Infusion Newsletter. The Newsletter is a publication that provides teacher candidates, practicing teachers, and teacher educators with information on teaching and learning English as a second language (TESL/ESL). We invite you to explore the range of support services and tools, such as a specialized language and culture-related practicum support services for teacher candidates; a variety of in-service workshops focusing on ESL issues; and the ESL Infusion Website. To all the teacher candidates and associate teachers: Have a great practicum!

Practicum Support Services

The primary goal of this service is to provide language and culture related support and/or advocacy during the practicum as needed. Our support service includes school visits on request by a teacher candidate, an associate teacher, a pre-service instructor, and/or a pre-service program coordinator.

The school visit may involve: a one-on-one meeting between a member of our Language and Culture Support Team to discuss the teacher candidate's concerns; and/or a group discussion including the teacher candidate, the associate teacher, and a member of our Language and Culture Support Team that addresses the associate teacher and/or the teacher candidate's concerns.

In no way is this service intended to be remedial or punitive; we are attempting to help teacher candidates make the most of their practicum placements.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please contact a member of our Language and Culture Support Team:

Antoinette Gagné: agagne@oise.utoronto.ca,
Ping Deters: pdeters@oise.utoronto.ca, or
Farahnaz Faez: ffaez@oise.utoronto.ca.

We thank you in advance for spreading the news about this service!

What would you do if...?

The following are scenarios of ESL-related issues that educators and/or ESL learners have experienced. Consider how you would respond in the same situation.

Scenario 1: During recess supervision you overhear a group of Grade 5 students discussing the latest on-ice exploits of several hockey stars. One individual in the group, an ESL student from your homeroom, is not only remaining silent during the discussion but is taking jibes from his peers for his lack of hockey knowledge.

Scenario 2: You are in your fifth year of teaching a Grade 10 academic course in an urban multicultural high school. The head of your department continues to be adamant that you use the same textbook that the other teachers in your school are using for this course. Despite your colleagues' enthusiasm for this text, and your department head's insistence, you continue to feel that this textbook presents the subject matter from an exclusively Western-European point of view and does not portray a balanced picture of your subject as it exists in today's world.

Scenario 3: An ESL student who was in your class a year ago tells you that the teacher in her mainstream senior English course is unwilling to make any accommodations to the course content or delivery in order to facilitate her learning

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(E.g., allowing extended test-taking time). This student tells you that her English teacher has said that she is not ready to be in this level of English class. She asks you to speak to her English teacher on her behalf.

Respond to these scenarios and/or submit your own here:

<http://eslinfusion.oise.utoronto.ca/scenarios.asp>

Affecting Waves: Coaching Newcomers by Jennifer Anderson

I worked for two years in a very diverse school community. During my second year there, I was faced with the daunting task of starting up a swim team. Although I contributed greatly to the aquatic program, I still felt that my role was pretty much to serve as an assistant and gopher for the Phys Ed department. I was very excited to finally have my own set of students to work with, setting goals, motivating and all of the fun stuff that comes along with being a coach.

Being new to coaching, there were tons of headaches with paperwork and eligibility, but I took on all students who were interested. After several practices and our first swim meet, what was left was a small but solid team consisting almost entirely of ESL students. Some were newcomers, while others had been in ESL at some point in their lives.

I loved my team. It was one of those rare instances where I enjoyed waking up before dawn in the dead of winter. On the mornings of practices, I was always the first person in the school, opening up the pool bright and early. For the most part, the students attended and tried hard. I felt good having a purpose and having the chance to lead something. I also knew many of my swimmers had a strong chance of winning.

It felt terrific. I knew the students were enjoying themselves and I knew that extra-curricular activities definitely benefit students on many levels but it was my casual conversations in the photocopy room with the ESL teacher that really opened my eyes to the impact of what I was doing. We would talk of the upcoming swim meet and she would tell me that all her students

were so excited about it. It was wonderful to hear, being a new coach.

She told me of one student in particular, a nineteen-year-old newcomer from Iran who seemed to have changed overnight. I never knew this previously but she told me he came to the school and remained incredibly depressed until having joined the team. It was then that I really saw how much bearing extracurricular life has on both students and teachers alike.

My team went on to place fourth in our region with several individual gold medals and many more ribbons in the top eight. I also had the chance to award the most improved trophy to another ESL student on the Junior team who started out shaky, with a swimming style completely his own, but ended up winning a ribbon in his final event.

It is moments like those when I realize that I've chosen a challenging and very rewarding career path that I wouldn't want to trade in for anything else. I know it sounds a bit gooey, but one thing I will never tire of hearing is my students' laughter.

Learning Hindi by Bohd Saraswati

I went to India many years ago to study yoga. The ashram was very international, and there were people from all parts of the world. However, I was later sent to teach yoga in a smaller area where very few people spoke English. I had to learn Hindi. This was a laborious process, but I made every effort to learn. Luckily, I was able to manage the accent, and was able to teach yoga classes in Hindi. This helped me a great deal. Slowly, over several years, in different places, I gained reasonable good speaking and some reading skills. Later I married an Indian and we returned to Canada. Since I am Canadian born (Bodh is my spiritual name) I feel fortunate to have learned this language by immersion. It stays with me today, and it changed the way I look at the world and the way I relate to my students. I understand the struggles of ESL students, as I experienced them myself.

We would love to hear your stories of teaching and/or learning ESL. Share them here:

<http://eslinfusion.oise.utoronto.ca/stories.asp>

Inclusive Classroom Strategies

The following ideas are just a few of many that can be found in a book by Elizabeth Coelho called, "Teaching and Learning in Multicultural Schools" (published by Multilingual Matters in 1998). This book will be of practical use to educators dealing with culturally mixed groups of students. It describes: a) ways to build an inclusive school environment, classroom community, and curriculum; b) inclusive approaches to instruction; c) antiracist education; and d) assessment in a multicultural setting. The book also provides background information on cultural diversity, including a description of the "immigrant experience". Here are a few ways you can get started on creating an inclusive classroom:

Introductions

- introduce newcomers as "a speaker of (first language) who is learning English" (i.e., not as someone who doesn't speak English)
- learn how to pronounce new students' names and encourage the other students to do the same

Class surveys

- begin by sharing information about yourself
- design a questionnaire or interview that can be used to gather information on students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds

Inclusive displays

- involve students in making a photograph mosaic of all the members of the class (including the teacher), labelled with personal information in the students' first languages and English

Partners and peer tutors

- organize bilingual partners for new students who are beginning to learn English and
- peer tutors who can provide support to new students with some English skills

Co-operative learning

- jigsaw activities (e.g., begins with groups working on different tasks or parts of a task; new groups are then formed with one member from each of the old groups; in the new groups, students share information about the different tasks they completed, and work together on a new task that requires their collective expertise)
- co-operative projects (e.g., brainstorm a list of questions around a general topic; ask students to form groups based on the question they would like to do a project on)

Support for language learning

- explain at the beginning of the year that the classroom will be a place for both language and subject matter (e.g., math, science) learning
- suggest ways the English-speaking students can help the English learners (e.g., by writing words down)

A multilingual classroom environment

- group students in same-first-language groups sometimes to show that their first languages are respected and that English is not being promoted at the expense of their first languages
- accept the judicious use of languages other than English in the classroom
- provide bilingual support (e.g., classroom partners and cross-grade tutors)
- respect language variety (e.g., be clear that varieties of English like Jamaican patois are languages with their own systems of grammar)

Classroom routines

- have important announcements (e.g., upcoming holiday) translated for newcomers and second language learners
- allow students who wish to work alone to do so

ESL Learners in the Mainstream

The following instructional principles were suggested by Russell Gersten, Scott Baker, and Susan Unok Marks in their chapter (Strategies for teaching English-language learners) in the book *Teaching every child everyday-Learning in diverse schools and classrooms* (edited by K. Harris, published by Brookline Books, Cambridge, Mass., 1998). The chapter describes key concepts for effective instruction for English-language learners, such as comprehensible input, meaningful access to the curriculum, and conversational versus academic language. There is a practical focus on concrete ways to provide meaningful access to the curriculum. Suggested strategies include:

Help students to learn vocabulary

Model

Use concrete examples and experiences

Perform and on-going assessment

Consistent language use

Use visual organizers

Some Useful Websites

Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks

Content: This site offers ESL assessment tools and resources

URL: <http://www.language.ca/>

Dave's ESL Café

Content: This site offers ideas for teaching ESL as well as information for those interested in teaching abroad

URL: <http://www.eslcafe.com/>

Intercultural E-mail Classroom Connections

Content: This is a free service to help teachers link with partners in other countries and cultures for e-mail classroom pen pal and project exchanges. IECC is intended for teachers seeking partner classrooms for international and cross-cultural e-mail exchanges

URL: <http://www.iecc.org/>

Metropolis

Content: This site links to a wealth of information on international migration issues.

URL: <http://canada.metropolis.net/>

Multicultural Calendar

Content: Holy Days of 12 major religions

URL: <http://www.multiculturalcalendar.com/>

National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center

Content: This site pertains to the professional development of K -12 foreign language teachers. Its three primary initiatives are performance assessment, effective teaching strategies, and new technologies in the foreign language classroom. Links to these and other projects can be found at the website.

URL: <http://www.cal.org/k12nflrc/>

Settlement.Org

Content: This site contains information and resources pertaining to settlement in Ontario. Newcomers' guides to both the public and catholic elementary and secondary school systems are available for free download in 20 languages

URL: <http://settlement.org>

You can find links to more websites relevant to ESL issues here:

<http://eslinfusion.oise.utoronto.ca/teachingresourcesi.asp>

You can add and review a website too!

Celebrating Linguistic Diversity: Annual Conference

Celebrating Linguistic Diversity is an annual two-day conference co-sponsored by the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and the Modern Language Centre (MLC) of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). The conference boasts a wide range of practical workshops designed specifically for ELD/ESL teachers, classroom teachers, guidance staff, and teacher educators. The conference will take place on Thursday, April 28, 2005 and Friday, April 29, 2005 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. It will be held at OISE/UT—252 Bloor Street West, Toronto. For more information, contact: Cynthia Abbott (Conference Manager) at 416-394-7183 or cynthia.abbott@tdsb.on.ca.

We hope that you will take advantage of this great learning opportunity!