



October 2009

www.atesl.ca

President's Message

by Judy Sillito

ATESL is 30 years old and has lots to celebrate! We have grown from a membership of 160 in the first year to where we stand today with over 730 members. We have organized provincial conferences since 1979 and this month we are co-hosting our second TESL Canada conference in the marvellous Banff Centre. This year's TESL Canada Conference, entitled **Weaving Pathways: Interculturalism and Language** has accepted over 700 participants from across the country. It is a spectacular opportunity in a spectacular setting for professionals in our field to share their expertise. It is also the site of our Grand 30th Anniversary festivities and I do hope all ATESL members will come out to help us celebrate!

The ATESL board continues to work closely with our government partners at both provincial and federal levels to conceptualize and implement projects that support our mission to encourage the highest standards of teacher preparedness and program delivery. One such initiative is the revision of the current Best Practices document. The first draft of the **Adult ESL/EAL and LINC Best Practices** will be presented at the TESL Canada conference this month, and I wish to applaud the fine work of Sara Gnida and Justine Light on refining and updating this key document.

Over the years that our provincial and federal partners have supported our intent and endeavours, they have helped many organizations in our sector produce resources, such as the Best Practices guidelines, for use by our profession. The scope of the projects and the breadth of development sites across the province have led us to a current project that will enable ATESL to create a system to manage this wealth of publicly-funded resources in order to make them more accessible to all stakeholders across the province. Watch for more details coming about this exciting initiative in the months to come.

Sadly, this year we lost a very special colleague. Dawn Seabrook de Vargas was instrumental in getting ATESL off the ground in the early years and continued throughout her life to be an important pillar of success and inspiration in the ESL community. Dawn will be sadly missed not only for her excellent contributions to the field but for her infectious positive embrace of life. On behalf of the LINC Service Providers of Edmonton and with support of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the Edmonton Catholic School District's CLB/LINC Projects Office is honouring the memory of Dawn Seabrook de Vargas with an award for excellence in her name. This award,

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Announcements, workshop dates, book reviews,
teaching ideas, and articles relevant to the field.
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More information and archives at atesl.ca

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2008 - 2009

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which will be called the ***Dawn Seabrook de Vargas Fellowship***, is to recognize outstanding contributions and service excellence in the field of ESL in Alberta. The award is open to both instructors and program administrators who are ATESL members involved in adult ESL in the province. The ***Dawn Seabrook de Vargas Fellowship*** will disburse a \$1,000 award each year for the next five years. The fellowship will be administered by the Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language, who will select a worthy recipient and award the fellowship at the ATESL Annual General Meeting each year.

In closing, I wish to thank our current board for their stellar work, to congratulate all former boards, whose good work and perseverance have brought us to this point of pride after 30 years, and to invite all of you connected with the work of ESL to consider a role on the board. Come discover the rewarding opportunities to both gain and give that participation on the ATESL board holds, all in the name of helping newcomers live full and fair lives in Canada. Recall the words of Ludwig Wittgenstein, "The limits of my language mean the limits of my world." It is the mission of ATESL to ensure that for immigrant adults in Alberta - the sky is the limit!

ATESL Mission Statement

The Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language (ATESL) is a professional organization that promotes the highest standards of teaching and English language program provision for all learners in Alberta whose first language is other than English. We do this by:

- encouraging and providing professional development opportunities that are consistent with generally accepted principles of adult learning and with currently understood principles of second language learning and teaching;
- liaising with other organizations, local, provincial, national, and international, engaged in education;
- creating awareness about immigration, settlement of immigrants, and English language learning by communicating with government, business, and the general public;
- encouraging awareness of issues of accountability and program standards by communicating with English language program providers and learners;
- encouraging the highest standards of teacher preparation and performance by administering an ESL teacher accreditation process;
- working collaboratively with government to develop policies and procedures which govern the provision of English language programs and related services for immigrants to Canada;
- encouraging and supporting the participation of learners in the decision-making processes that determine their educational choices.



Thirty Years of ATESL

submitted by Marian Rossiter

Early beginnings

The *Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language* was incorporated as a provincial society on February 19, 1979. Laura Ho, Barbara Duffus, Dawn Seabrook, Alexandra Sawchuk, and Wendy Uncles were the visionaries who signed the application for incorporation. The proposed objectives of the organization at that time were to:

- a) encourage communication amongst teachers of English as a Second Language in the province of Alberta;
- b) represent and express the professional concerns of those vocationally committed to ESL (English as a Second Language) in Alberta;
- c) promote professional development amongst teachers of ESL in Alberta;
- d) provide a professional journal for teachers of ESL in Alberta;
- e) be a source of professional assistance for those teaching ESL in Alberta;
- f) participate, with other provincial ESL Associations, in professional development at the national level; and
- g) develop and maintain an extensive bibliography of books and materials related to ESL teaching.

Over the years...

Since 1979, ATESL boards have worked diligently to promote ESL in Alberta and to advocate for learners, instructors, and the profession, under the leadership of the following presidents:

1979-1980	Laura Anderson Ho	1994-1995	Judy Hasinoff
1980-1981	Manny Ford	1995-1996	Gail Kingwell
1981-1982	Jan McDougall	1996-1997	Sheila McLeod
1982-1983	Sandy Sawchuk	1997-1999	Elza Bruk
1983-1984	Dini Steyn	1999-2000	Lilli Fortier
1984-1985	Virginia Sauvé	2000-2001	Leila Ranta
1985-1986	Sally Thompson	2001-2002	Shaheen Murji
1986-1987	Lorna Smith	2002-2003	Maria McMinn
1987-1988	Val Larsen	2003-2004	Jaye Fredrickson
1988-1989	Liz Karra	2004-2005	Terese Szlamp-Fryga
1989-1990	Jill Stanley	2005-2006	Lesley Dudley
1990-1991	David Wood	2006-2007	Justine Light
1991-1992	David Watt	2007-2008	Marian Rossiter
1992-1993	Tracey Derwing	2008-2009	Judy Sillito
1993-1994	Silvia Bégin		

Some of the association's innumerable achievements over the past 30 years:

- 1979-1980 First ATESL conference (Calgary);
- 1982 TESL Canada Conference, co-hosted by ATESL;
- 1983-1984 Development of the ATESL Bylaws;
- 1986-1987 Advocacy to broaden access to ESL beyond "heads of the household",
to include other members of immigrant families;
- 1991-1992 Advocacy to reduce cuts to K-12 ESL programs in Calgary; Establishment of the
ATESL Accreditation scheme;
- 1992-1993 Rally at the Alberta Legislature and letter-writing campaign against proposed cuts to ESL;
- 1993-1994 Completion of the *Best Practice Guidelines for Adult ESL/LINC Programming and Instruction
in Alberta* document;
- 1995-1996 Development of the *ATESL Mission Statement*;
- 1996-1998 *Adult ESL Program Standards* project;
- 1998-1999 *Needs Assessment of Professional Development for ATESL Members*;
- TESL Canada Conference, co-hosted by ATESL;
- 1999-2001 Development of the ATESL website;
- Creation of *ATESL Ethical Guidelines for ESL Professionals in Alberta*;
- 2003-2004 Development of Terms of Reference for ATESL Committees, policy documents,
and descriptions of ATESL Board positions;
- 2005-2006 *Occupational ESL "Lessons Learned"* conference;
- 2006-2007 Connecting ESL Professionals and Communities project: a series of workshops on
ESL Programming for Settlement and Integration; ESL Literacy; ESL Assessment;
Professional Development Opportunities; and Intercultural Competence Training;
Survey of ATESL members (demographics, current trends);
Benefits package for ATESL members (dental, health, travel insurance);
- 2007-2008 Enhanced Language Training (ELT) Conference;
- Formation of Special Interest Group (SIG) listservs;
- 2008-2009 *Best Practice Guidelines for Adult ELS/LINC Programming & Instruction in Alberta* project:
Revision of Best Practice Guidelines (2004) document;
- Rally to advocate elimination of the Refugee Transportation Loan;
- Establishment of the *Dawn Seabrook de Vargas Fellowship*;
- TESL Canada Conference, co-hosted by ATESL.

Many of these milestones were the result of successive years of dedicated work by ATESL boards and association members. And over the years we have also benefited from stimulating conferences and workshops, and a vibrant, dynamic professional community.

As our learner population and profession have evolved since 1979, so too has ATESL's mandate (see the *Mission Statement*). One constant that the association has enjoyed since its inception, however, is the ongoing support of Alberta Employment and Immigration, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and our ATESL members and local committees throughout the province. Thanks to all of you for your enthusiasm and commitment, and for the role that you have played in any of our activities over the past three decades.

***CONGRATULATIONS, ATESL, ON YOUR 30th ANNIVERSARY!
LET THE CELEBRATION BEGIN!***



A Tribute to Dawn Seabrook de Vargas

A pioneer and trailblazer;
one of the founding members of ATESL

On February 20, 2009, the TESL community lost one of its energetic and valuable members - Dawn Seabrook de Vargas. Dawn's early departure has left a significant gap in a broad range of expertise that she accumulated over the years in her many roles in a variety of subject areas within the TESL discipline. Dawn was a pioneer and trailblazer; she was one of the founding members of ATESL. From 1985 to 2009 she worked at NorQuest College, where she wore multiple hats. She worked initially as an English in the Workplace instructor at the Westin Hotel and then at the Royal Alexandra Hospital. Dawn soon moved up to a coordinator position in which she supervised all English in the Workplace programs, among many other assignments. She seemed to be involved in everything: assessment, community education, cross cultural education, plain language and, of course, Essential Skills, which became a lasting interest of hers.



Dawn is remembered as a kind colleague full of energy, compassion, and ideas, and as someone who was always interested in creating exciting learning opportunities for students. She used her energy and ideas to break new ground in a variety of areas. She was the driving force in the development of English in the Workplace programming, which she expanded into industries such as forestry, steel, and food processing, among many others. She was involved in the development of multiple resources. She became the Essential Skills expert and helped instructors throughout the community to develop an understanding of Essential Skills.

Over the last 8 years, Dawn worked on the NorQuest College Rural Routes initiative where she literally took her expertise and energy on the road by providing services to smaller communities all over the province. Through this project, she facilitated numerous professional development workshops on a variety of topics related to teaching ESL, and she mentored many coordinators, instructors, and tutors providing ESL programming in their communities. She built close relationships with people all over the province; those she worked with knew that they could always call on Dawn with their questions and problems regarding ESL programming and that she would point them to the resources they needed.

Concurrent to her work at NorQuest College over the last 8 years, Dawn was the project manager for Alberta Workforce Essential Skills society. In that role, she managed many projects and focused her efforts on helping instructors develop capacity based on applied research and shared experience. Through this work she was able to put into practice her ongoing commitment to professional development for instructors. Anyone who worked on projects with Dawn was provided with professional development on Essential Skills, workplace literacy, and English in the Workplace.

In her multiple roles, Dawn worked with a large number of employers, among them the Alberta Food Processors Association, the Alberta Forest Products Association, Syncrude, and the Construction Safety Association.

Dawn's contributions to the TESL field are many and varied, and she is fondly remembered as someone who generously shared her knowledge and expertise and assisted many in their professional development.

submitted by Anna De Luca

PEACE

I am from Darfur, Sudan. I was born in North Darfur. I completed Grade 8. Then I quit school because the government made me a lot of problems. I decided to work and help my family. In 2003 some Darfurians acted against the abuse of human rights in Darfur because the government killed people. Darfurian civilians are victims of the war and I am one of them. I want all countries around the world to stop these crimes. There are children and old people killed.

The Sudanese Security services arrested me more than three times and put me in prison, beating me, putting me under the sun for a long time, and insulting me and my tribe. They threatened my life. Then I left Sudan for Egypt. In Egypt also, the Egyptian security services put me in prison for three years without judge. The UN accepted me as a refugee. The government of Canada helped me to immigrate to Canada. In 2008 I came to Canada, then I felt I am safe. I got more help from Canadian people and they are still helping me everywhere. I am so happy to be part of these people. When I left Sudan in 2004, I lost my family. When I came here I asked the Canadian Red Cross to help me to find my family. The Red Cross took information about my family. After 4 months, they found my family and I contacted them. I have one daughter. When I called her, she said me, "Daddy, come to Sudan" because she did not know me. She wants to know me.

In May, 2008, I began classes to learn English. I got help from my teachers in different levels and I am still getting help. I also work hard with them. I am also working a part-time job because I am sending money to my family. People in Darfur don't have food to eat. I have to thank the Canadian government. I hope all countries help Darfurian people.

submitted by A. Bhir

Bursary notification

Apply for an ATESL professional development bursary
<http://www.atesl.ca/cmsms/membership/bursaries/>

