



ALBERTA TEACHERS
OF ENGLISH AS
A SECOND LANGUAGE

SEPTEMBER 2017

www.atesl.ca

Follow ATESL on Facebook, Twitter @ATESLnews, and Google +.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

President's Report

Lisa Rochman

ATESL 2017 Conference Report

Wendy Chambers & Chris Wharton

Edmonton Local Report

Elina Stop & Janet Kwong

Central Alberta Report

Anna Robertson & Elise Kruithof

Calgary Local Report

Jyoti Grewal & Nadia Khan

Southern Alberta Report

Greg Ogilvie & David Fuller

TESL Canada Report

Kim Dudas

Rural Routes Report

Martha Urquhart

Bursary Report

Wendy Ilott

Advocacy Committee Report

Tracey Derwing

University of Alberta TESL Talk

President's Report

September brings us to the end of summer and for many to the 2017-2018 school year. I hope everyone had a relaxing and productive summer. Amazing how fast time flies when the weather is warm. ATESL's board and conference planning committees have been hard at work planning conferences! For ATESL's 2017 conference, we received quite a number of excellent proposals for presentations giving the review committee quite challenging work. Thank you to everyone who submitted a proposal. Your commitment to sharing your knowledge and expertise is what ATESL is all about! For those of you who have not registered yet make sure to do so before September 29 to take advantage of the early bird registration

[\(https://www.atesl.ca/conference/welcome/\)](https://www.atesl.ca/conference/welcome/).

Thank you to everyone who submitted nominations for the ATESL awards. We know the forms take time but the recognition it brings for great work done in the TESL/ESL field makes it worthwhile! We are excited to announce the award winners at the conference.

We have received questions on the role of TESL Canada for ATESL members since a portion of your membership dues are paid to them. We are pleased to let you know TESL Canada will be presenting on the role and value of TESL Canada for ATESL members. If you have any questions on this, please attend the session!

Our October conference will bring a change in our board. Chris Wharton will be taking on President and we will be saying a heartfelt thank you and good-bye to Wendy Chambers who has been a phenomenal in her role as the ATESL president. ATESL is seeking to fill a few board positions for 2018-2019. If you are interested in playing a key role in helping to shaping quality professional development opportunities in our province consider joining the board!

In addition to our annual conference we have also partnered with Immigration Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and NorQuest College to plan the 2017-

2018 LINC Language Training Learning Event (LTLE). This will be Alberta's first event of this type and we look forward to continuing the ATESL tradition of offering high quality professional development at this new conference. LINC teachers, keep a eye out for a survey that will be coming your way soon asking about professional development.

Respectfully yours,
Lisa Rochman

ATESL 2017 Conference Report

The annual ATESL 2017 conference takes place on Friday, October 20th and Saturday, October 21st at the Westin Hotel located in downtown Calgary. The conference theme is *Expanding Possibilities: Diversity and Innovation*. We look forward to welcoming three incredible keynote speakers, including Dr. Bonny Norton (University of British Columbia), Dr. Darren Lund (University of Calgary), and Dr. Greg Kessler (Ohio University). In addition to their keynote talk, speakers will also be contributing a special workshop session. In addition to the great line-up of keynote speakers, the conference will also feature the Educational Technology Summit - a special event taking place on Saturday - co-organized by ATESL and BC TEAL.

ATESL received a record number of proposals and after undergoing a rigorous peer-review process, 100 proposals representing research presentations, workshops, and panels were accepted. An at-a-glance schedule and a detailed online schedule are now available at atesl.ca/conference/program.

Early bird conference registration ends September 29th. ATESL is pleased to offer CART services and ASL interpreters at this year's conference. If you require these services, please register before September 29th.

ATESL has negotiated low conference rates at the Westin Hotel. To take advantage of these great rates, delegates are encouraged to book their accommodations before September 29th. For more details and to book a room, see atesl.ca and follow the conference links.

ATESL and IELTS are very pleased to be offering pre-conference IELTS teacher training at SAIT on Wednesday,



October 18th and Thursday, October 19th. Please note this training session has been extremely popular and is full.

In an effort to reduce ATESL's carbon footprint, conference bags will not be provided this year. Instead, delegates are asked to bring their own bag to stash the printed at-a-glance conference program. Everyone is encouraged to bring an ATESL conference bag from a previous year. One special prize will be awarded on both Friday and Saturday to the individuals who bring the oldest ATESL conference bag. To enter the contest, individuals must check in with Irene Wood at the ATESL desk.

ATESL would like to recognize professionals in the field of English language teaching and learning that we have lost over the past year (2016-2017). Anyone interested in honouring and acknowledging the professional contributions of a deceased colleague, please send a brief statement of no more than 150 words together with a photo to conference2017@atesl.ca. Statements must be submitted by **Friday, September 29th**. Please note statements may be edited. In memoriam statements will be included in the printed program.

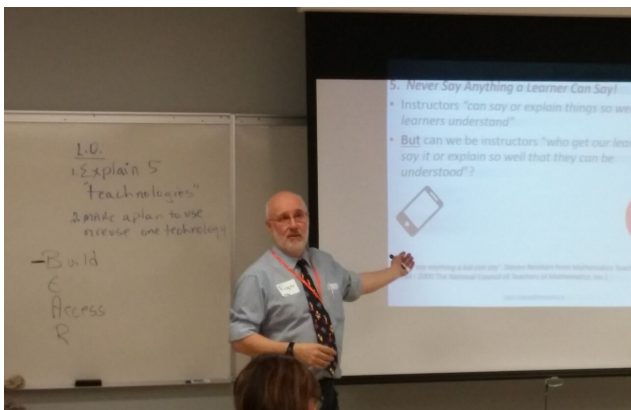
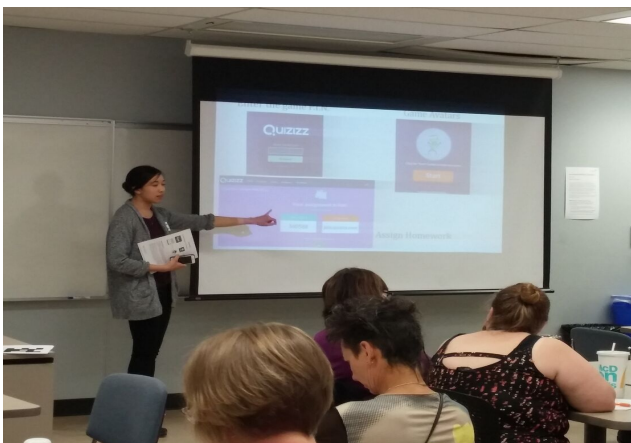
We would like to thank the team of incredibly dedicated enthusiastic team of volunteers, including among them ATESL board members Lisa Rochman, Nadia Khan, Janet Kwong, and Jyoti Grewal who have been working tirelessly over the past months to organize the conference. Thank you so much for your time, enthusiasm, and dedication! Also, a huge thank you to Irene Wood for her exceptional work.

Conference updates are available on the ATESL conference website as well as ATESL's Facebook page and Twitter (@ATESLnews, #ATESL17).

Respectfully submitted by: Wendy Chambers and Chris Wharton, ATESL 2017 Conference Co-chairs

Edmonton Local Report

At the end of May, Edmonton hosted the 2017 Mini Conference, "Enhancing Teaching with Technology". Unfortunately, our speaker presenting on Google classroom was unable to attend. However, attendees were able to take home tips and strategies for using Kahoot, Cram, EdPuzzle, Flip Quiz and other online apps which could easily be incorporated into the classroom. There were four lucky winners of the textbook draw at the end of the mini-conference.



Photos: Petchphilin Ismael and Roger Moore sharing their expertise on online tools!

We did not have a meeting in June. Meetings will resume starting September with the Annual General Meeting, where new members of the committee will be ratified. We will also have a draw for a **free ATESL 2017 Conference registration** among ATESL members.



ALBERTA TEACHERS
OF ENGLISH AS
A SECOND LANGUAGE

With Janet's 2-year term soon coming to an end, the Edmonton Local is looking for a motivated individual who would like to join us as the next Co-Chair. Other positions available are Secretary, Hospitality, Communications Officer and Treasurer. If you have questions about any of the positions, please feel free to contact Elina or Janet at edmonton@atesl.ca. Please forward all submissions of interest to the same email.

Next ATESL Edmonton Local Meeting

Friday, September 29, 2017

Annual General Meeting

and

What every adult ESL teacher needs to know about bilingualism

Presenter: Leila Ranta

Location: TBA

Submitted by: Elina Stop and Janet Kwong

Central Alberta Local Report

The Central Alberta chapter has been quiet over the summer months, but the executive is gearing up for the fall. The entire executive – Heather Frayjo, Carol Smyth, Elise Kruihof and Anna Robertson – will be staying on for another year, providing continuity to our local. After experimenting last year with some different times and types of local meetings in order to involve more members, we will be trying something new again. Rather than monthly meetings as in the past, we will develop 3-4 longer PD sessions, to be offered on weekends. In early September, our local membership will receive an email asking for input on topics and PD needs. We plan to offer our first PD session in late November.

Submitted by Anna Roberson and Elsie Kruihof

Calgary Local Report

The summer has been pretty quiet in terms of sessions but many members have been busy with the upcoming conference planning. On September 18th at SAIT, the Calgary local is hosting a back-to-school idea share at 6:00 pm. Members will be asked to bring in their favorite snack or recipe to share as well as a 10-minute activity to use in class for extra time or as a substitute. This will be a networking opportunity giving members a chance to reconnect after the summer. We will also be doing a raffle for a free conference registration at this event.

Respectfully submitted by Jyoti Grewal and Nadia Khan

Southern Alberta Report

Last year the Southern Alberta Chapter of ATESL held two workshops in March and May about changing demographics in ESL classrooms and pragmatics respectively. This academic calendar we are hoping to expand the number of workshops offered and include some social events as well. Stay tuned for updates on upcoming events!

The Southern Alberta Chapter would like to welcome David Fuller as the new co-chair working alongside continuing co-chair Greg Ogilvie. David has extensive experience working with second language populations in public schools and currently holds the position English as Second Language Lead Teacher for the Lethbridge School Division No. 51. He is a passionate advocate for restorative justice practices in the second language classroom and has written a Master's thesis, published an article, and given several presentations on the topic. We are really excited about the contributions he will make to the chapter over the next year.

Finally, ESL educators from the southern region of the province are very excited about the upcoming ATESL Conference in Calgary. We expect to be well represented at the conference and are excited about the diversity of presentations that will be offered by southern members, including presentations by faculty and students from the University of Lethbridge.

We are looking forward to a great year of professional development and community building!

Submitted by: Greg Ogilvie and David Fuller



ALBERTA TEACHERS
OF ENGLISH AS
A SECOND LANGUAGE

Provincial Executive

2016 – 2017

Lisa Rochman

President

Chris Wharton

President-Elect

Wendy Chambers

Past President

Wendy Illott

Secretary

Seppy Masoodi

Treasurer

Kim Dudas

TESL Canada Representative

Jyoti Grewal, Nadia Khan

Calgary Local Co-Chairs

Janet Kwong, Elina Stop

Edmonton Local Co-Chairs

Elise Kruithof, Anna Robertson

Central Alberta Co-Chairs

Greg Ogilvie, David Fuller

Southern Alberta Co-Chairs

Martha Urquhart

Rural Routes Representative

Dr. Tracey Derwing,

Theresa Wall,

Stacy Norrbom

Advocacy Committee Members

Irene Wood

Business Manager

TESL Canada Report

New TESL Canada Board

Joy Lin Salzberg has stated that her goals for the coming year as the TESL Canada President are to continue to work forward with the strategic plan, to cement the foundation of the organization and to support revenue generation.

ATESL Conference 2017

Judy Sillito (Past President of TC) will give a 45 min presentation at the ATESL Conference about the work of TESL Canada.

Judy has invited me, as ATESL Representative to TESL Canada, to present regarding my role, my experience on the TESL Canada Board, and about the ways we keep our organizations connected and working together.

Citizenship Guide and Loan Program

TESL Canada has written letters supporting ATESL's initiatives regarding the Citizenship Guide and the Refugee Loan Program.

TESL Canada Conference 2018

The next TC conference will take place June 7-9, 2018 in Vancouver BC.

Report respectfully submitted by: Kim Dudas, ATESL Representative to TESL Canada



ALBERTA TEACHERS
OF ENGLISH AS
A SECOND LANGUAGE

Rural Routes Report

Regional Advisors are available throughout the fall for consultation. Find their contact information at: <https://eslruralroutes.norquest.ca/about-us/staff.aspx>.

SATIE is available to help you design your PD priorities. Take advantage of this automated self-assessment tool to plan the workshops you need for the fall. To learn more, visit SATIE.norquest.ca.

Rural Routes workshops will be available again in the fall. For a full list of available workshops, visit our website. Start your planning early to maximize your PD potential!

Rural Routes Online will start again in October. The fall schedule will be online in September. To learn more or to download your copy of the schedule, visit <https://eslruralroutes.norquest.ca/services/online.aspx>.

Prep for Online Learning (a Moodle Course) is available to ESL practitioners in Alberta. For more details, visit norquest.ca/online-learning. Rural Routes also has our own version of the Prep Online course. Information for the Rural Routes version can be found at <https://eslruralroutes.norquest.ca/services/workshops.aspx>.

Rural Routes is excited to welcome the new Rural Routes lead, Dorte Weber. Dorte can be reached at the same number 780-644-6758 or by email Dorte.Weber@norquest.ca.

Submitted by: Martha Urquhart

Bursary Report

ATESL will be awarding bursaries this fall to support professional development opportunities for its membership. We have only received one application so far as the deadline fast approaches on **September 15th**. Following up on previous awards, the Bursary committee reviewed the claim and issued a cheque for one recipient of the spring award.

For more information about the ATESL bursary, including the application form, please see

<https://www.atesl.ca/membership/bursaries/>

Submitted by: Wendy Illott

ATESL Advocacy Report

The Advocacy Committee did not meet over the summer, but as a result of input from the Town Hall, held in mid May, the Committee did write two letters, one in support of rescinding the refugee transportation loans, and one with regard to the citizenship study guide, Discover Canada, which is written at a much higher level than the required Benchmark 4. Minister McCallum, on taking his position after the election, announced that the guide would be revised, but we had heard nothing from Minister Hussen on the matter. The content of the letters appear below. IRCC is not prepared to change the refugee transportation loan program at this time, but it is good to continue to raise the issue with them. ATESL also wrote to our provincial counterparts and TESL Canada, asking them to contact IRCC as well. TESL Canada followed through on both counts. We had some success with the citizenship letter. Tracey Derwing, representing ATESL, and Joy Salzberg, representing TESL Canada, were contacted by the team at IRCC tasked with revising the Guide. Both will participate in a review of the Guide in November. IRCC has since reached out for



ALBERTA TEACHERS
OF ENGLISH AS
A SECOND LANGUAGE

information on both individuals and organizations who could help with the French version and we were able to provide names and contact information for both.

The Advocacy Committee has put together a panel discussion for the conference in October; we encourage members who would like a bigger picture of English language training in Alberta to come. *The Breadth of*

Adult English Language Programming in Alberta will be hosted by Lisa Rochman, who will moderate a panel of representatives from a wide range of learning contexts from large cities to small centres who will discuss features of their programs. ATESL members will gain a sense of the broad nature of language provision, taking into consideration issues such as learner characteristics, curricula, teacher qualifications, funding, and more.

Another ATESL initiative this summer was to provide our support for the adoption of the CLBs as opposed to the CEFR for Canadian Heritage's civil servants who need to improve their proficiency in another official language. Wendy Chambers wrote on behalf of the ATESL Board; from the Advocacy Committee's perspective, it just makes sense to use a Canadian developed framework that is available in both English and French.

Respectfully submitted,

Tracey Derwing, Chair

ATESL Advocacy Committee



6-102 Education North
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB T6G 2G5

The Honourable Ahmed D. Hussen, MP
Minister, Immigration, Refugees, Citizenship Canada
365 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, ON K1A 1L1

July 31, 2017

Dear Minister Hussen:

On behalf of Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language, we are writing to congratulate the department on the revisions to the citizenship study document (as outlined in the National Post: <http://nationalpost.com/g00/news/canada/taxes-census-treaties-described-as-obligations-of-citizenship-in-new-guide/wcm/016bf5ad-58df-4924-82b4-78ea5168e768?i10c.referrer=>). We were very pleased about the content changes, but we have some concerns regarding the length of the new document, and a problem that may not be addressed in the new version. *Discover Canada* was written at uneven levels of difficulty; using a standard reading test, some parts of it register at Grade 17. Rest assured that Grade 17 is far more complex than CLB 4, the level expected of citizenship applicants. Moreover, there is considerable information in the current study guide that is unnecessary for citizenship, (e.g., the different architectural styles of the provincial legislatures). Significantly, research has shown that unnecessary detail, such as this example, contributes to difficulty understanding the text as a whole, and to determining which facts are important. Thus, as language experts, we laud the promise of a new document, with the new focus on Indigenous Peoples.

As the department is well aware, the failure rate on the citizenship test since *Discover Canada* was introduced has far exceeded the rate when *A Look at Canada* was the primary guide. It is our understanding that currently, approximately 25% of the people who write the test fail it, whereas with the previous document as the source content, more than 90% of test-takers passed. This is, in part, because it is difficult to create a test written at CLB 4 when the content of the source document is written at much higher CLB levels. Just ensuring that the test questions are at CLB 4 is not enough. The current *Discover Canada* is a confusing, complicated document that makes it unsuitable for study for individuals who are at CLB 4 or even CLB 7.

We urge your department to ensure that the new study guide is accessible to a broad range of newcomers. A document written in plain language at CLB 4 would ensure that fewer individuals fail the test. The Canadian government is rightly proud of the welcoming nature of our country. Ours is one of the only immigrant-receiving countries where the majority of citizens hold positive attitudes towards immigration, and in fact, for many Canadians, our multicultural nature is a defining feature of our country. The members of ATESL would

like to see a return to a fairer approach to assessing readiness for citizenship, so that more of our students and former students can join the Canadian family and become active, participating members of civic society. If there is anything ATESL can do to help make the text more readable, we as an organization would be more than happy to invite some of our literacy experts to provide suggestions. We look forward to hearing from your Department.

Sincerely,

Tracey Derwing

Tracey Derwing, PhD
Chair, ATESL Advocacy Committee
tracey.derwing@ualberta.ca

On behalf of the ATESL Board

Wendy Chambers

Wendy Chambers, PhD
Member, Advocacy Committee;
Past President, ATESL
wchambers@atesl.ca

On behalf of the ATESL Board



6-102 Education North
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB T6G 2G5

The Honourable Ahmed D. Hussen, MP
Minister, Immigration, Refugees, Citizenship Canada
365 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, ON K1A 1L1

July 15, 2017

Re: Elimination of the Refugee Transportation Loan Program

Dear Minister Hussen:

In September of 2015, the Research and Evaluation Branch of CIC (now IRCC) produced an Evaluation of the Refugee Transportation Loan program, concluding that the requirement to repay the loans interferes significantly with the settlement of refugees. They pointed to several specifics. For instance, Visa Officers overseas must determine both need for humanitarian aid and ability to pay the loan, but, appropriately, the former issue outweighs the latter, thus only 1-5 minutes is spent explaining the loan. When refugees arrive in Canada, although many are aware of the loan, they do not understand that they are supposed to start repaying within 30 days, and often do not know how much they owe (loans can be as high as \$10,000). IRCC is unable, in many cases, to set up loan accounts and send statements until 4 months after the refugees' arrival, so their first statement usually indicates that they are already in arrears. The government's own evaluation determined that a significant number of refugees quit language training to work to pay back the loan. Furthermore, if the family has children in high school, they often work 5-6 hours a day while going to school fulltime to help the family repay the loan, thus jeopardizing their own educations. Clearly, the transportation loan program has long-term negative effects on the outcomes of many refugee families. The loan program costs roughly \$13,000,000 annually. In the grand scheme of things, this is a very small amount that could be absorbed by the government, and made up eventually in higher income taxes from refugees who stay in school or language training in order to secure better jobs in the future.

The loan program started in the 1950s to facilitate the travel of Europeans to Canada, who were needed in the labour market, but who could not afford to pay their own transportation. In other words, the loans expedited the recruitment of newcomers to the benefit of the government. The clientele has changed substantially since then; refugees typically come to Canada with nothing but their own human capital. They come on humanitarian grounds, not to speed up a deliberate influx of workers to the economy. Given the complete change in clientele since 1951, and the entirely negative evaluation of

the program in 2015, we recommend that IRCC eliminate the transportation loan for refugees. It makes more sense economically to allow refugees to settle, to learn an official language to the best of their ability, to finish school, and to find the best jobs possible. The current loan program hinders these goals.

The members of our organization, Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language, see first hand the stress the loan causes our students. It is debilitating for many and it interferes with their learning. For this reason we urge you to cancel the transportation loan program. We are aware of a petition that recently went to the House of Commons asking for the repeal of the loan program. People from all over Canada signed it – the loan program reflects poorly on Canada and our reputation as a welcoming nation.

Sincerely,

Tracey Derwing

Wendy Chambers

Tracey Derwing, PhD

Wendy Chambers, PhD

Chair, ATESL Advocacy Committee

Member, ATESL Advocacy Committee

On behalf of the ATESL Board of Directors
tracey.derwing@ualberta.ca

On behalf of the ATESL Board of Directors
wchambers@atesl.ca

University of Alberta TESL Talk

Who: Professor Niclas Abrahamsson

Deputy Director of the Centre for Research on Bilingualism; Stockholm University

What: Age effects on language acquisition, retention, and loss: Key hypotheses and findings

One of the longest-standing scientific debates on language acquisition concerns the relationship between age of first exposure and language development, the big divide being between proponents and opponents of the idea of one or several critical period(s) for language. While being perhaps the most-observed language acquisition phenomenon among laypeople, ironically, children's success in second language acquisition relative to that of adults is still, 50 years after the publication of Lenneberg's (1967) Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH), a highly contested issue among scholars of linguistics, cognitive psychology, second language acquisition, and bilingualism. Considering the boldness of a biologically underpinned hypothesis on human language acquisition that assumes maturational changes to be the cause of child-adult differences, it should have come as no surprise to Lenneberg (nor anyone else) that the CPH was to become subject to falsification – and quite intensively so.

My aim with this talk is to recapitulate what may be seen as the key falsification criteria for the CPH and how my own research group's empirical results have related to these. The research drawn upon encompasses a wide range of language learning circumstances that includes second and heritage language acquisition; early and late language exposure; simultaneous and sequential bilingualism, as compared to early and late/sequential monolingualism (in the case of international adoptees); near-native ultimate attainment; language learning aptitude; first language attrition; and first language residual activation (again, in the case of international adoptees). These issues were investigated using comprehensive research designs comprising a strict selection of participants and native controls, a large battery of elicitation techniques with demanding language tasks covering aspects of phonology, grammar, and lexical idiomaticity in both production and perception, as well as an aptitude component. The findings privilege an interpretation of age-of-acquisition effects in terms of maturational constraints rather than primarily as an effect of cross-linguistic or sociopsychological circumstances. I conclude the talk with implications for further research directions, specifically with respect to potential bilingualism effects and a dual system approach.

When & Where: Wednesday, September 20th; 5:00 – 6:00 pm, Education South, Room 277



ALBERTA TEACHERS
OF ENGLISH AS
A SECOND LANGUAGE

The Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language (ATESL)

is a professional organization which promotes the highest standards of teaching and English language program provision for all learners in Alberta whose first language is other than English.

Newsletter Information

The ATESL Newsletter is published quarterly.

*Deadlines: **February 15, May 15, August 15, November 15***

Announcements, workshop dates, book reviews, teaching ideas, and articles relevant to the field.

Contact: Irene Wood at services@atesl.ca

More information and archives at www.atesl.ca/newslettersArchive

Professional Development Bursaries

Apply for an ATESL Professional Development Bursary

Deadline: **September 15, 2017**

<http://www.atesl.ca/bursary>