



Alberta Teachers of English  
as a Second Language

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March 2016

www.atesl.ca

## President's Message

Alberta is fortunate to have a wealth of natural resources, but perhaps more importantly, it is also a province with a wealth of human resources. Each day, English language professionals across the province contribute frontline services, instruction, research, supports, and resources intended to better the lives of language learners and contribute to the strength and quality of Alberta's classrooms, communities, and workplaces. Your commitment and the contributions you make everyday as an EAL professional are important drivers to building a strong, vibrant, welcoming Alberta for newcomers to Canada. With the start of 2016, your ATESL Board continues its commitment to planning and preparing relevant and engaging professional development opportunities and services to support you - our valued members.

Please mark your calendars and plan to attend the ATESL 2016 conference on October 14th and 15th. The conference will take place in Edmonton at the Fantasyland Hotel. I am very pleased to announce Philip Zirkwitz and Jeff Hendrick have taken on the responsibilities of the conference co-chairs. Both are enthusiastic and ready to plan a great event! Be sure to watch the ATESL website ([atesl.ca](http://atesl.ca)) for updates and information about the conference, including the call for proposals.

The Advocacy committee and Strategic Planning committee are active, vital elements of ATESL. Starting in January 2016, the Advocacy committee has taken up the challenge of gathering information and resources designed to support and assist ESL professionals as they work with newcomers to Canada, particularly focusing on how to best support the needs of the Syrian refugee population. The Strategic planning committee is developing a membership e-survey to be distributed in late March or early April. The purpose of the survey is to seek membership feedback that will inform the development of ATESL's strategic plan. With the start of 2016, ATESL has begun an innovative project with Bow Valley College and NorQuest College as partners. The ATESL project, "Intercultural Communicative Competence - Online Professional PD for ESL Teachers" will be developed over the next 15 months and is funded by the Government of Alberta's Labour Attraction and Retention Branch. The ATESL Board continues to work diligently to provide quality professional development events at the local levels, and in the newsletter pages that follow, each provide a report of their activities. Please see the report from Sally Scholefield, who outlines the recent activities of TESL Canada. Patti Hergott, Dean of Foundational and Intercultural Studies at NorQuest College and ATESL Past President (2011-2012) offers insight in her article in the Perspectives on the Profession column. I am very grateful for the talented, hardworking board members who donate many, many hours to ATESL. Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment. Should you have any questions, comments, or concerns related to ATESL, please feel free to contact me at [president@atesl.ca](mailto:president@atesl.ca).

Respectfully,  
Wendy Chambers

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Alberta Teachers of English  
as a Second Language

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## Calgary Local Report

On January 30, approximately 30 local ELT professionals came together at Bow Valley College for our first PD event of 2016 - a double-header focused on enhancing learners' reading skills. To kickstart the morning, Abir Abutaha led a session focused on activating learners' schemata to improve reading skills. Different types of schemata - rhetorical, linguistic and content - were explored, and participants had the opportunity for hands-on analysis of texts in order to generate techniques for activating prior knowledge. Next, Lena Bishop facilitated a workshop on unconventional summarization skills - ones that operate at the microstructure level. These skills are often underestimated and underused, but they can actually allow readers to summarize texts more rapidly and efficiently than many of the skills commonly taught. Lena also introduced the group to an online Latent Semantic Analysis (SLA) tool that can be used to evaluate student summaries.

The Calgary Local would also like to report that our Treasurer Kim MacDonald, after four years of dedicated service on the local committee, has decided to step down. We would like to thank Kim very sincerely for her long-term contribution to the success of our local team. Kim, your creativity, efficiency, and one-of-a-kind sense of humour will be missed! Peggy Jubien has agreed to assume the role of Treasurer. Peggy teaches in an ESL program for seniors at Bow Valley College and teaches computer courses at Mount Royal University. She volunteered on the ATESL planning committee for the recent ATESL/TESL Canada conference in Lake Louise and has been an active local member for years. Please join us in warmly welcoming Peggy to the local committee!

Planning for upcoming professional development activities will be guided by the results of a survey sent out to local members in early January. The survey showed that the following PD topics are of most interest to our members:

- Assessing speaking (without relying exclusively on oral presentations)
- Effectively assessing portfolios
- Maximizing your employability as an ELT professional
- Selecting which vocabulary to teach
- Intercultural Communicative Competence
- Using screencasting to provide feedback on learners' written work

The local organizing committee is actively seeking presenters on the topics above; if you would like to become involved, please send us an email at [calgary@atesl.ca](mailto:calgary@atesl.ca).

## Central ATESL Report Submitted by Nancy Bain

Some familiar faces and some new ones! Our treasurer, Lois Prosteby, hosted our first meeting of the new year at the Dawe branch of the Red Deer Public Library. We had invited speakers well known to the CARE (Central Alberta Refugee Effort) community. CARE LINC instructor Heather Bellamy was on Lesbos Island in Greece last summer, for a working holiday with an organization she has experience with - Samaritan's Purse out of Calgary. Hannah and Matt Diessen, CARE instructors also, with connections to a humanitarian aid organization, had spent two weeks in Lebanon being hosted and touring around to learn more about situations in that country. With the goal of increasing our attendance at monthly meetings, we were happy to welcome a couple of tutors from the Adult Literacy Program at the Dawe Library and a volunteer from CARE.

We learned many things: how quickly a Canadian passport renewal can be processed in Calgary if need be, how complicated the "3D grid relationships are between the various groups in Lebanon, how cold the waters those dinghies plow through are, and how warm the reception by humanitarian volunteers on Lesbos is when folks arrive. One of the speakers began the presentation by saying the purpose of the summer travel was to see "how we can be involved in the situations back here." I think one of the concluding statements by a speaker sums that up. "These people have a strong need to tell their stories...over and over again. By coming alongside, we can be part of their healing."

## Edmonton Local Report

We started the new year with a highly relevant and timely meeting regarding the Syrian refugee crisis.



From left to right: Janet Kwong (Co-Chair), Annette Kreider (CSS/LARCC), Susan Coughlan (IRCC), Diana Kim (City of Edmonton), and Sabine Ricioppo (Co-Chair)

### *Professional Development*

The ATESL Edmonton Local met on Friday, January 29, 2016 from 4:30-6:15 pm for a panel discussion. We had a huge turnout for the event. There were over 50 attendees and locals were able to receive up-to-date information on topics such as available services, and settlement statistics from various organizations directly involved with Syrian refugees. The speakers that participated in the panel were: Annette Kreider (CSS/LARCC), Suzanne Gross (EMCN), Diana Kim (City of Edmonton), and Susan Coughlan (IRCC). Attendees were able to ask the panellists questions during the question period. The panel discussion was highly informative and eye-opening! Thank you to all who came out!

The February ATESL Edmonton Local Meeting was the ESL Directors' Forum on Friday, February 26, 2016, which was also very well attended.

### **TESL Canada Report to ATESL**

The Standards Advisory Committee has been working to revise and update accreditation standards. TESL Canada will be aligning its requirement for online practica with TESL Ontario's, allowing up to half of the observation and practice teaching hours to be done in online, synchronous environments.

The committee of Provincial Representatives has begun meeting and Terms of Reference have been drafted for future approval from the TESL Canada Board. The chair of this committee has attended her first Executive Board meeting in order to represent the voice of the provinces more directly to TESL Canada.

The TESL Canada Board agrees that website maintenance is crucial to the success of the organization. As a result, a Website sub-committee has been formed, including members who have website expertise. They are working on further enhancement of the TESL Canada website.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sally Scholefield,  
TESL Canada Representative for ATESL



### **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](mailto:services@atesl.ca)

More information and archives at [www.atesl.ca/newslettersArchive](http://www.atesl.ca/newslettersArchive)

### **Professional Development Bursaries**

Apply for an ATESL Professional Development Bursary

**Deadlines: March 15, September 15**

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

### **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.



## Perspectives from the Profession

### *Intercultural Leadership* by Patti Hergott

Intercultural leadership is leading from a perspective where words, actions, structures, community, and values align to support the achievement of goals across culturally diverse contexts. This is a great response to an ever-shrinking world that is more competitive, relies on a more diverse workforce, and is grappling with defining a new work ethic.

Leadership and intercultural competency are skills that must be cultivated. Formal education and theory provide background and perspective, and our experiences provide the context and meaning. I have four favorite leadership books that have inspired me and provided theories I connect with.

*Strength Finders* (Tom Rath) identifies and values strengths. It helped me build a team that complements and brings a diversity of strengths. In developing my team, I look for alignment of their strengths and passions to ensure the work that they are doing is meaningful and successful. The emphasis of diversity, strengths, and alignment is a great foundation for intercultural contexts and strong performance.

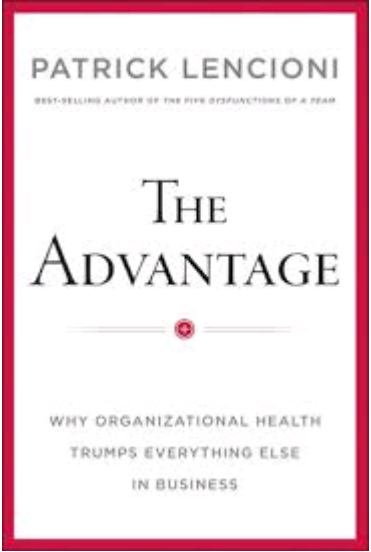
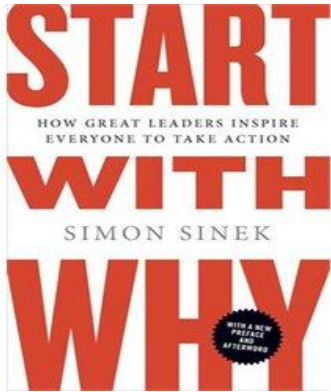
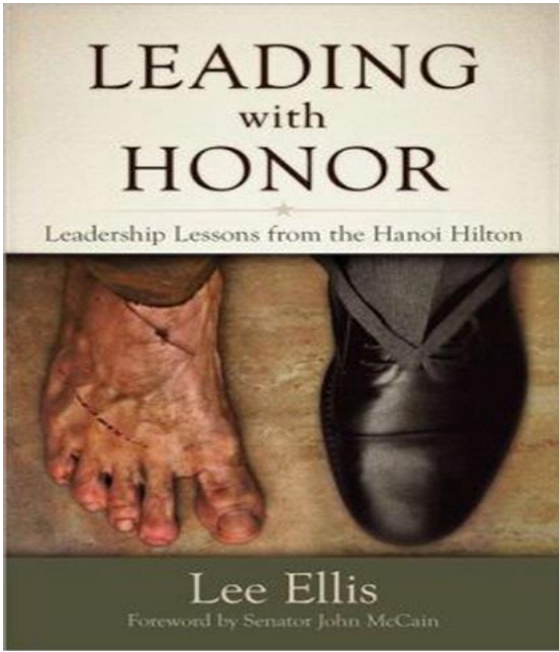
A unique read is *Leading with Honor* (Lee Ellis). In reading this book, I was reminded to think about the dual responsibility and the importance of leading yourself from within, as well as leading others. Leading yourself is an extremely important skill – it is the starting place where you think of being an intercultural leader. If intercultural competency doesn't have meaning to you, it likely won't shine through your team or organization. Both books, *Leading with Honor* and *Start with Why* (Simon Sinek), emphasize the points of knowing thyself, and knowing why it matters, why it's important to you, and why it should be important to your employees. Sinek writes in his book that the why, not the what or the how we do it, is most important. The why is what inspires people and keeps us true to our mission and vision.

The fourth book, *The Advantage* (Patrick Lencioni) breaks down some of the qualities and attributes needed in teams to be successful in developing different types of leadership styles. Five behavioral principles are discussed that every team must achieve to be successful. It starts with trust. We must trust one another to have constructive conflict. Conflict is where diversity mostly shows itself. Diverse teams with similar whys build commitment; this forms accountability, and then together we achieve results.

I'm in a role where I strive to further refine and demonstrate this skill set. Our college could be described as a great Canadian social experiment: we have an incredibly culturally-diverse student population, and we explicitly strive to be leading examples of intercultural leadership. We know our why. Our why is in our values, brand, programming, and it is embedded throughout the college in our Inclusion model.

Why is intercultural leadership a style for me? It makes our students successful. Quality education and successful students transform families and communities. For years, I've marveled at our graduating classes - hundreds of diverse grads, plentiful cultures, and a world awaiting their leadership. It is my job, as an academic leader, to ensure that our students are better prepared than many of us were for a diverse workforce, and hopefully one day that will include freedom from cultural bias, and an abundance of intercultural competent leaders. This is our organizational community - the norms that we share, our inclusive brand, an environment that embodies diversity, and a leadership team I want to be part of.

*Patti Hergott* is the Dean of the Faculty of Career, and Intercultural studies at NorQuest College in Edmonton.



## Focus on Research by Marian Rossiter & Marilyn Abbott

In this ninth *Focus on Research* column, we are pleased to bring you an overview by Diane Hardy of a recent applied research project that showcases some of the resources developed by Bow Valley College, Calgary, to support ESL literacy instruction. The article is very timely, and we encourage you to explore the links in it, which will take you to a variety of useful websites.



### ***Stories from the Field 3: An exploration of programming through innovation in ESL Literacy*** by Diane Hardy

The Centre for Excellence in Immigrant and Intercultural Advancement (CEIIA) at Bow Valley College, Calgary provides leadership in the integration and advancement of immigrants into Canadian society through English language learning, career advancement, intercultural awareness, and global citizenship. For the past 15 years, a focus of the CEIIA has been to conduct applied research projects that investigate promising practices in ESL literacy classroom instruction and program development. These projects have involved comprehensive literature reviews, the implementation of national surveys and focus groups, ongoing input from provincial advisory committees, and extensive reflective teaching practices. As a result, the CEIIA has become a recognized leader in the field of ESL literacy, producing numerous ESL literacy resources and offering ongoing professional development opportunities for ESL literacy practitioners across Canada as well as internationally.

Within each applied research project, a primary goal has been to share CEIIA faculty expertise with the broader community through published resources and frameworks, and practitioner training workshops and webinars. In 2015, the CEIIA partnered with the Centre for Excellence in Foundational Learning at Bow Valley College to carry out an applied research project which encouraged reflective practice in order to capture and share the ESL literacy expertise of the faculty at the CEIIA. This interdepartmental collaboration has resulted in a publication called *Stories from the Field 3: An Exploration of Programming through Innovation in English as a Second Language (ESL) Literacy*.

#### **Description of the project**

*Stories from the Field* is an applied research project led by the Adult Literacy Research Institute, through the Centre for Excellence in Foundational Learning at Bow Valley College. This initiative reports on teaching philosophies, instructional practices, and current issues, challenges and innovative work happening in the adult literacy and essential skills field throughout Alberta. It takes a journalistic approach to professional development, inspired by *Literacies: Researching Practice Practicing Research*, a national literacy journal published from 2003 to 2009.

Stories from the Field [Volume 1](#) and [Volume 2](#) were both published in 2014.

The third collection, *Stories from the Field 3: An Exploration of Programming through Innovation in English as a Second Language (ESL) Literacy* consists of eight stories that share the collaborative and collective efforts of CEIIA faculty to meet the unique needs of the ESL literacy teaching and learning community.

The project research consisted of a literature review and interviews. Sandi Loschnig, the project's researcher and writer, wrote about her discussions with ESL literacy practitioners, capturing their successes and challenges, best practices and approaches, innovations, and professional development needs.

#### **Summary of Volume 3 stories**

In each of the following stories, CEIIA faculty shared information and reflections about ESL literacy initiatives and applied research projects they helped inform. The stories capture CEIIA faculty expertise, including lessons learned and personal



insights with the goal to surface and possibly strengthen the existing community of practice among ESL Literacy practitioners across Alberta.

[Building Capacity: Professional Development for ESL Literacy Practitioners](#) Ten years ago, there was limited research that focused on the instructional needs of adult learners who require the simultaneous development of language and literacy skills. Instructors across the country commented on a lack of available resources to meet the unique learning needs of this demographic. Instructors teaching ESL literacy also shared a common experience of working in isolation. The first article features an interview with Shelagh Lenon, a CEIIA faculty member, who helped develop the [ESL Literacy Network](#), a respected and recognized online community of practice that supports the professional development of ESL literacy instructors across Canada. The website provides access to CEIIA resources and ongoing training opportunities for teachers involved in the field of ESL literacy. This article describes the value of a resource that provides access to classroom materials and training opportunities developed and vetted by ESL literacy experts.

#### [ESL Literacy Learners Engaging with their Communities](#)

The CEIIA is committed to supporting the learning needs of young adult English language learners with interrupted levels of formal education. Many of these learners have had limited access to leadership roles in educational contexts and have not been involved in co-curricular activities such as volunteering. The second article features an interview with Kelty Christensen who facilitates a leadership program for learners in the Bridge program at Bow Valley College. The Bridge program supports ESL literacy learners, between the ages of 18 to 25, to access adult upgrading and post-secondary career programs. This article shares how access to a leadership program has helped to increase learners' feelings of self-confidence and has fostered higher levels of engagement within the community.

#### [Digital Literacy: An Essential Skill for ESL Literacy Learners](#)

A significant obstacle to equalizing educational opportunities for learners with interrupted formal education is technological inequality which stems from not only lack of access to computers, but also is a result of lack of access to Internet connections, technical support, proper software and accessories, and training. The third article in the series showcases the importance of increasing the digital literacy skills of ESL literacy learners. This article features CEIIA faculty members, Dan Merryfield and Don Morris, discussing the implementation of a program that lends laptops to learners each trimester. Dan and Don discuss the success of the program, sharing how access to laptops has supported learners to not only meet program outcomes but also to foster the technological skills necessary for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning.

#### [ESL Literacy Comes of Age](#)

The fourth article in the series highlights the leading role that CEIIA faculty have played in researching and developing innovative promising practices in ESL literacy. This article features a discussion with Emily Albertsen and Valerie Baggaley, editors of the CEIIA resource called [Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook](#), a comprehensive yet practical resource which provides an introduction to program design and instruction in ESL literacy. This article highlights the collaborative process of the project which drew upon the shared knowledge of faculty within the CEIIA, as well as extensive research including a literature review, focus groups held in Alberta, and a survey of 100 ESL literacy practitioners worldwide.



### [Designing Curriculum for ESL Literacy Learners](#)

Many of our ESL literacy applied research projects have focused on identifying learning needs and developing resources that help instructors to address those needs. This article shares an interview with Katrina Derix-Langstraat and Jennifer Acevedo who led a CEIIA project which involved the creation of a curriculum framework called [Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Curriculum Framework](#). This framework provides information, guidance, and a five-stage process to help administrators, curriculum developers and classroom instructors create responsive programs that meet the specific needs of adult ESL literacy learners. Katrina and Jennifer discuss the development of this framework and its applicability to classroom instruction.

### [Innovative Financial Literacy Programming Helps Newcomers](#)

This article highlights the [Financial ESL Literacy Toolbox](#), a resource that supports ESL literacy practitioners in the delivery of financial literacy and numeracy instruction. It features a discussion with CEIIA faculty members, Heidi Beyer and Ruby Hamm, and showcases a toolbox that contains themed units, lesson plans and resources to support both classroom instructors and curriculum developers. Heidi and Ruby discuss the collaborative nature of the development of this resource and the value of peer-reviewed lessons plans and activities for use in language learning contexts.

### [ESL Literacy Readers: Igniting a passion for Reading](#)

This article highlights the development the [ESL Literacy Readers](#), a series of 40 themed-based accessible stories created specifically for adult ESL literacy learners and designed to complement the settlement themes used in LINC programs. The ESL Literacy Readers were written by CEIIA faculty members who have extensive experience working with adult ESL literacy learners. This article captures a discussion with Joan Bruce and Theresa Wall who were involved in researching and identifying guidelines and best practices for creating ESL reading materials across a literacy continuum. They led a team of CEIIA faculty in the development of these reading materials, helping to ensure that the stories would authentically represent learners themselves as well as events and issues that learners may experience living in Canada.

### [Shaping and Reshaping Teaching Practice in ESL Literacy](#)

The final story in the series is a two-part article that examines how experienced ESL Literacy practitioners at the CEIIA work to create transformative learning environments. [Part one](#) of the article features a conversation with three instructors who work in the Computer-Enhanced ESL Literacy Program: Norma Tersigni, Lois Heckel and Joanne Pritchard. They discuss teaching in multi-level classes and the collaborative nature of the program. [Part two](#) of the article features discussions with CEIIA faculty members, Shelley McConnell and Julia Poon. Shelley and Julia share their evolving teaching practices and philosophies, highlighting the importance of focusing on and building upon ESL literacy learners' strengths.

The articles shared provide a source of professional learning for ESL literacy instructors across Canada. Visit the [CEIIA website](#) to learn more about ESL literacy and the applied research projects that are happening at the CEIIA.

**Diane Hardy** is a Coordinator of Innovation and Research at the Centre for Excellence in Immigrant and Intercultural Advancement at Bow Valley College, Calgary. Diane managed the applied research projects highlighted in these articles. She continues to collaborate with CEIIA faculty members to identify and address ESL literacy needs through applied research and practitioner training initiatives.

## Refugee Transportation Loans – and an ATESL Letter-writing Campaign

Were you aware that most refugees are required to repay the government for the cost of their transportation to Canada – and that they are supposed to start their repayments within 30 days of arrival? We all know that newly arrived refugees have a difficult settlement period ahead of them, but some of them start off their new life in Canada with a debt to the federal government of up to \$10,000. Recently, the government announced that Syrian refugees who have come to Canada after November 4<sup>th</sup> (the day the current government took power) will have their transportation loans waived. This is a very positive step, but refugees from other backgrounds are still required to pay the transportation loans. The whole loan program is only 13 million dollars annually. However, in the week of Feb. 29, the government indicated that it is considering abandoning the loan program (it is also considering keeping the program but giving people extra time to pay). The members of the ATESL Advocacy Committee proposed that the ATESL membership conduct a letter-writing campaign to argue for the implementation of a transportation grant program, rather than a loan program. Every member should have received an email on Friday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, urging people to send an email to the government in the next day or two. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) must submit its budget to the Treasury Board by March 9<sup>th</sup>, so as many emails protesting the loan program as possible before that date would be useful.

For more information on the loan program, the following document is a very interesting and thought provoking read. The Evaluation Branch of Citizenship and Immigration (now IRCC) conducted an evaluation of the loan program last September, and concluded that it interfered with refugees' settlement. You can access the evaluation document at this website: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/evaluation/ilp/2015/index.asp>

Also, The Canadian Council for Refugees has a series of videos (prepared in Edmonton) about the impact of the refugee loans on families. These videos provide additional background about the loan program and are available for viewing at <http://ccrweb.ca/en/impacts-loans-refugees-video>.

If you are reading this before March 9<sup>th</sup>, and haven't yet written to your own MP, Minister John McCallum of IRCC, and Minister Bill Morneau, Finance Minister, here are their contact details: [John.McCallum@parl.gc.ca](mailto:John.McCallum@parl.gc.ca), [bill.morneau@parl.gc.ca](mailto:bill.morneau@parl.gc.ca). To find your own MP's email, go to this website: <http://www.lop.parl.gc.ca/ParlInfo/compilations/houseofcommons/memberbypostalcode.aspx?Menu=HOC>

Please see an email received Friday, March 4, from ATESL Administration – ATESL Letter-writing Campaign: Urgent Request – for more details and a template letter.

The Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching Conference (PSLLT) is an international conference that attracts researchers and practitioners from Australia, Europe, Asia, the USA, and Canada. This summer, it will be held at the University of Calgary, providing ATESL members with a unique opportunity to meet international scholars and practitioners whose specialty is teaching pronunciation. The theme of the conference is *The Role of Technology in L2 Pronunciation Research and Teaching*. The plenary speaker is **John Levis**, the founder of the conference, and the editor of the *Journal of Second Language Pronunciation*. A special feature of this conference is a Roundtable plenary, with guest speakers **Catia Cucchiari**, Senior Researcher, Centre for Language and Speech Technology, Radboud University, Nimegen, The Netherlands; **Jonathan Dalby**, Associate Professor, Department of Audiology and Speech Science, Indiana University-Purdue University, Fort Wayne; Fort Wayne, Indiana, USA; **Debra Hardison**, Associate Professor, Department of Linguistics

and Languages, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, USA; **Hansjörg Mixdorff**, Professor, Department of Computer Science and Media, Beuth University, Berlin, Germany; and **Ron Thomson**, Associate Professor, Applied Linguistics, Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada. **Mary Grantham O'Brien**, Director of the Language Research Centre at the University of Calgary, will moderate the Roundtable, which is generously sponsored through a grant from the journal, *Language Learning*.

Another attractive feature of the conference is the *Teaching Tips* session, which will be held on Saturday afternoon (August 13, 3:30 – 5:00). ATESL is sponsoring this round robin session in which several practitioners will share their expertise. *Teaching Tips* involves several presenters from Canada and abroad who will be seated at different tables. They will welcome about 5 people at a time to learn about a specific pronunciation teaching tip. The presenters have 7 minutes to explain their tip, and then a bell rings, and individuals will have 3 minutes to move on to another table. This session provides an easy and fun way to pick up great new ideas for your classes. All ATESL members are welcome to attend this portion of the conference at no cost.

We encourage ATESL members who have an interest in pronunciation teaching and research to attend the whole conference (but for this you will need to pay the full conference fee). Some individuals may wish to present at the conference. The deadline for abstract submissions is **April 18**. Please visit the conference website for details (<http://llc.ucalgary.ca/psllt2016/>). The organizers, Mary Grantham O'Brien, Tracey Derwing, Jennifer Foote, and Silvia Rossi, wish to acknowledge the funders of the conference, whose contributions have kept the registration fees very low. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, *Language Learning*, the Faculty of Arts at the University of Calgary, ATESL, and the Faculties of Education and Extension at the University of Alberta have all provided financial support.