

FALL 2015



# NEWSLETTER

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## From The Chair

We have just had our first board meeting of the year and welcomed three new directors, Katie Burham, Mina Oh-Tannouri and Ricardo Arsinaberreta-Montejo. We are excited to have them join the team and are looking forward to what can be done during this year in TESL Saskatchewan.

Starting this fall, we have the new Cambridge English Teacher online PD opportunity coming your way, as well as the annual TESL SK/SKTEAL conference scheduled for April 30th, 2015 in Regina. Keep an eye on the website for details as they become available. Various committees are meeting regularly to keep up to date with all that is involved in accreditation, professional development, awards and scholarships, and communications as well as several others areas of TESL SK interest.

So whatever your interests or needs are this year as an ESL teacher in Saskatchewan we hope the TESL Saskatchewan network, website, conference, and/or the Cambridge English Teacher online PD opportunity helps you do what you do even better.

Sandra Catterick

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## TESL Canada Life Member Award



A tremendous thank you to TESL Saskatchewan for nominating me and appreciation to TESL Canada for selecting me for the Life Member Award presented at the recent TESL Canada Conference in Lake Louise. This award is really for all of us as my contributions have always been with the encouragement, support and assistance of my TESL colleagues.

We in TESL Saskatchewan are inspired by our profession and aim to provide high quality service to our clients and support to other professionals. I look forward to continued new challenges and ongoing involvement in TESL and hope to work with many of you in future.

Ruth Epstein

## Wayne Eger/Myrna Firman Award Recipient

It is with gratitude I would like to thank the TESL Saskatchewan committee for awarding me with this scholarship for my post-secondary studies. It will help cover my financial needs for books and tuition. In the fall of 2015, I will be attending the University of Regina in the faculty of nursing.

I came to Canada 6 years ago in 2009 from a small refugee camp. I know from personal experience that not everybody in this world has access to good medical care. When I lived in Nepal, my uncle died from pneumonia because we did not have effective education or medical support. I also witnessed many people pass away because we did not have good educated people working in the field of medicine. From this experience, I acquired the interest of helping people through a nursing career. The direction of education I am going will benefit others, and I am sincerely thankful to the TESL Saskatchewan committee for making it all possible.

Sincerely,

Monica Tamang

## English Language Teacher Training for K-12: Progress!

One of the most exciting developments of the past year in Saskatchewan's TESL training map is this fall's new commitment by the University of Saskatchewan – College of Education to the creation of an Additional Qualification Certificate program in TEAL.

Yes, we have had a provincial TEAL AQC for eleven years, consisting of eight or nine TESL courses that CERTESL has had available in distance format, plus one or two relevant electives. This has been very helpful to teachers and learners in the K-12 system, but has not been an ideal response to the need. Because the CERTESL classes serve some learners who do not have B.Ed. degrees, experienced K-12 teachers enrolled in the existing program find some of their valuable learning time dedicated to basic teaching skills that they already have. Also, because CERTESL serves adult as well as K-12, valuable course time is spent on content related strictly to adult environments. K-12 teachers do need to understand the experience of their EAL learners' parents, and high school teachers often do find themselves with learners who benefit more from the CLBs than the CFR, but a different balance is needed. More course time needs to be spent looking more deeply at the contexts faced by children and teens integrated into mainstream K-12 classrooms.

The reconstructed AQC will do a much more focused job of addressing the real life of K-12 EAL education. The full plan has not yet been finalized. However, the intent is to create two new distance-delivered courses, one on Assessment and one on Content-Based English language teaching. Several of the existing courses will be retained in the new AQC, but with a bit of retooling to sharpen the K-12 focus, and with the transition of the retained non-degree options into degree credit status. Participants who have not previously earned credits through courses in a second language will be required to take at least one course in another language, both to experience the process of language learning from the student's side of the table and to gain understanding of how the principles learned in TEAL courses are applied in teaching and learning practice. Participants will still do a professional project, and will still be able to choose one or two relevant electives.

The Ministry of Education has seconded EAL consultant Nadia Prokopchuk to the College for thirty days between September 2015 and January 2016 for the purpose of assisting with the initial development of the new AQC. The process is also being supported by the recent formal attachment of the CERTESL program to the College. SKTEAL has assisted by gathering feedback from members who have completed the existing AQC, and consultants and teachers in the Saskatoon Public and Catholic school boards have also provided insight.

The new AQC will require some face-to-face time, most notably in relation to the second language course requirement. However, the courses to be included in the new program that are already offered at a distance will continue to be distance offerings, with improved online features, and the new Assessment and Content-Based Instruction courses will be developed using online distance modes.

Shannon Storey, CERTESL/AQC in TEAL

## **Professional Development for Administrators: Teaching to Remember**

As a coordinator in a K-12 school division, I spend a lot of time meeting with other central office staff, organizing professional development and responding to inquiries from teachers and administrators. Due to the nature of the role, however, I don't spend enough time face to face with students. I have been away from the K-12 classroom for about 6 years, and from the adult classroom for about 9 years. Because there are many parts of teaching I have truly missed, and because I think it's important for administrators to remember the realities of the classroom, I decided to head back to teaching this fall for my own professional development. Luckily for me, the part-time program at the University of Saskatchewan Language Centre is busy in the fall. When they called to ask if I would take on an evening class, I was ready! I am now the proud teacher of the Fall Term Intermediate Writing and Grammar class twice a week.

Before the first class, I was excited, but also nervous, sleepless, and worried that I'd forgotten how to put a good lesson together. Needless to say, I spent a major portion of the weekend prior to the first class planning, prepping, researching and wondering about who might be in my class. I pored through the support materials, the text book, and the suggestions left by former teachers. I consulted a colleague who had lots of experience teaching the class previously. "Do students complete the reading in class or at home?" "What's your suggestion for using the lab time?" Time and support from colleagues are both so valuable in teaching. After the first evening, some of my fears were assuaged. I have a great class of motivated, diverse, interesting people who bring lots of energy to the room. I look forward to seeing them twice a week, and this keeps me moving at the end of a long day at my regular job. However, it did take me a while to remember some of my teacher "tricks" and skills. At first, for example, I forgot to monitor my rate of speech, and to check for understanding. It didn't take long to realize, though, that not everyone was following my directions. On the third evening, to my surprise, many of the students were 5 or 10 minutes late. I now open the class with a self-directed activity to allow for varying arrival times. In regards to my fears about lesson planning, it did take me a couple of classes to remember the multiple and varied pieces of effective instruction. Teaching seems so simple...until you try it!

Undoubtedly, going back to the classroom has been an excellent reminder of the challenging nature of teaching. A proficient teacher is like the conductor of an orchestra, keeping many components in mind all at once. Some parts are emphasized while some are softened, depending on the piece of music and the instruments involved. Teaching, like beautiful music, takes practice, persistence and skill but is so gratifying when you get it right. Now, I remember.

Shauna Tilbury

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## TESL Saskatchewan Award of Merit

This year's Award of Merit recipient is Deborah Hulston of Regina, Saskatchewan.

Deborah has served the field of TESL for many years. Several of these years were spent overseas in Korea. Currently, she serves as the Academic Coordinator of ESL at the University of Regina, Language Centre. Deborah jumped right into the TESL Saskatchewan (then SCENES) board 6 years ago and brought energy and enthusiasm as a member, vice president and then president of TESL Saskatchewan at a time when TESL Saskatchewan was growing and in a significant transition. Under her leadership, TESL Saskatchewan moved through a series of consultative exercises resulting in a new board structure to manage the needs of a continually increasing membership and continual growth of ESL in the province.

Besides the accomplishment of the successful board transition, another achievement of particular note was Deb's management of the joint TESL Canada and TESL SK/SKTEAL conference hosted by the University of Regina in 2013. Deborah spearheaded this immense effort with positivity and grace. Thanks to her efforts, considerable attention was brought to the ESL field in Saskatchewan.

One of her colleagues describes Deborah as a "hard worker, someone who listens first and speaks second, a person who is culturally sensitive in a variety of environments. She encourages personal and professional balance in her day to day life and this is greatly valued by her colleagues and staff."

**Congratulations Deborah !!**