



# Accent

Volume 23, Number 5

June 2019

## President's Message

by Joan Miles



On behalf of the English as a Second Language Council (ESLC), sincerest thanks to all of you who are dedicated to supporting English-language learners (ELLs) in schools across the province. The importance of the work you do in helping to build social, cultural and academic capital for newcomer learners and their families cannot be overstated.

In the September 2018 issue of *Accent*, then ESLC president Dianne Leong-Fortier reminded readers of the many ways in which the council supports teachers of ELLs. The ESLC is committed to providing teachers, both those who are experienced and those who are new to the profession, with professional learning opportunities throughout the year. Hopefully, many of you were able to attend the ESLC annual conference in Edmonton in November, where keynote speaker Keith Folse challenged us to “up our game” by expanding our understanding of how to explicitly teach grammar and vocabulary to ELLs. Of course, many other excellent presenters at the conference shared their wealth of knowledge and practical strategies for empowering learners in the classroom. In addition to the conference, the ESLC hosts several regional learning events throughout the year, in both urban and rural settings, organized by our wonderful PD committee members and our special interest groups. As well, the ESLC provides access to both print and digital resources through our website ([www.eslcata.com](http://www.eslcata.com)), blogs, social media and brochures.

The goal of the ESLC is to be responsive to its members. We're listening to you! With the arrival of many school-aged Syrian refugees in the winter of 2016, teachers sought to increase their understanding of trauma-informed practice and to develop their skills to support students with limited formal schooling. In

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# Editor's Corner

by Annie Fung



What a long winter! I generally love the indoors, but even I was slowly dying inside. Aha! Figurative language that I must explain to my ELLs to reassure them that their dear teacher is not dying—yet. I'm sure you have had a few bumps and laughs over

figurative language and idiomatic expressions this year. But I digress.

With a change in my role at work this year, I was shifted more to the background, and while I do miss my students and my own classroom, it has been exciting to see other teachers doing brilliant things in their classrooms for their students. Perhaps you were able to get some new ideas at November's ESLC conference. Some sessions specifically targeted teachers' desire to learn how to work better with ELLs. You may also want to check out the ESL Website Galore list that some of our wonderful colleagues created for the conference ([www.eslcat.com/uploads/files/Documents/PDF%27s/ata\\_eslc\\_conference\\_2018\\_esl\\_websites\\_galore.pdf](http://www.eslcat.com/uploads/files/Documents/PDF%27s/ata_eslc_conference_2018_esl_websites_galore.pdf)).

This issue of *Accent* includes two articles that will certainly enhance your practice, especially in the area of how to teach ELLs in content-area instruction. (Thanks, Joan and Samantha!) This is one of those rare times when two articles complement each other, and I hope you read them both, as well as the other pieces here.

If you have read my previous editor's messages, you know that they are usually filled with resources and reflections rather than commentaries on specific matters. I find it more practical to share tidbits of information that may be of help to you. This time around, I'll keep it short and sweet, because I don't want to keep you from the other articles in this issue. Please check out some of the resources below. I welcome your feedback and your suggestions for other resources!

## ESL Proficiency Benchmarks—I Can Statements from Alberta Education

[www.learnalberta.ca/content/eslapb/i\\_can.html](http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/eslapb/i_can.html)

If you have been following the ESL Tidbits on our e-mail list or on our social media, you will know already that Alberta Education has released new I Can Statements for kindergarten to Grade 6. Students can use these statements for self-assessment of their language learning based on the Alberta K–12 ESL Proficiency Benchmarks. They are a great resource for helping students and parents understand the expectations related to language learning.

With some creativity, you can use these statements for other activities in your class. Why not plan ways to discuss the purpose of the ESL benchmarks, assessment, second language acquisition and how students can work on their language skills for September? I truly believe that these ongoing conversations with students help keep their awareness of their language learning and progress at the forefront, and when done sensitively and regularly, they also alleviate anxiety in our ELLs (for example, “Why is writing still so hard for me, and why don't I get all these jokes my new friends are making?”).

## Empowering ELLs

[www.empoweringells.com](http://www.empoweringells.com)

Maybe you are familiar with Larry Ferlazzo's work (<http://larryferlazzo.edublogs.org>). Many of us could get lost for days in these education websites and blogs (if we didn't have to plan that unit or mark those math tests, that is). I discovered a new favourite recently—a website called Empowering ELLs, by Tan Huynh. Tan is a dedicated ESL teacher in the United States who has created this website (which includes a blog) to share research-based ESL strategies in order to assist ELLs in their social and academic language development.

I love the website for its ease of access (posts are clearly categorized as grammar, technology and so on). In addition, the text and layouts are easily digestible for the busy teacher, and the posts are

# Bathroom Briefs

EAL strategies on-the-go as you go

Episode # 7

## Research Says

Scaffolds can help ELLs process information, and communicate their understanding (Walqui, 2003; Gibbons, 2008).

## Strategy

Sentence stems and frames help language learners articulate the ideas they have. Often, they just need help in knowing how to begin their verbal responses.

## Discussion Stems



What \_\_\_\_\_ said made me think about \_\_\_\_\_  
That perspective is interesting because \_\_\_\_\_  
I made a connection to \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_  
So what you are saying is \_\_\_\_\_

## Meta-cognitive Stems



Now I understand that \_\_\_\_\_  
I found a solution by \_\_\_\_\_  
Today I learned \_\_\_\_\_. The way I learned it was \_\_\_\_\_  
I used to think that \_\_\_\_\_. Now I think \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_

**More sentence frames next week**

**EmpoweringELLs.com in collaboration with Olivia Petraglia**

Dodge, J., & Honigsfeld, A. (2014). Core instructional routines: Go-to structures for effective literacy teaching, K-5. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Gibbons, P. (2008). English learners academic literacy and thinking: Learning in the challenge zone. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Walqui, A. (2003). Conceptual framework: Scaffolding for English learners. San Francisco: WestEd.

Used with permission from Empowering ELLs ([www.empoweringells.com/bathroom-briefs/](http://www.empoweringells.com/bathroom-briefs/)).

backed by research, with links if you want to do further digging. To illustrate his descriptions of specific strategies and methods he uses in his classroom, Tan also includes videos of his students working. A picture is worth a thousand words, and with videos . . . well!

The teachers I work with are as excited as I am about Tan's Bathroom Briefs ([www.empoweringells.com/bathroom-briefs/](http://www.empoweringells.com/bathroom-briefs/)).

.com/bathroom-briefs/). These briefs are a tongue-in-cheek way to empower your colleagues to do some more ESL reading. Being a teacher himself and knowing how fast teachers can "do their business," Tan has made the graphics and key concepts easy to read in a very short time. The briefs can be downloaded as PDFs and shared with colleagues.

Now I will share some of my favourite posts from the blog. Hope you can find the time to explore them during the summer!

The following three posts are from the tiered vocabulary category:

- "Tiered Vocabulary: Not All Words Are Created Equal" ([www.empoweringells.com/tiered-vocabulary/](http://www.empoweringells.com/tiered-vocabulary/))
- "Tier 2 Words: Words That Make a Difference" ([www.empoweringells.com/a17-tier-two-words/](http://www.empoweringells.com/a17-tier-two-words/))
- "Tier 3 Words: Teaching Content-Specific Vocabulary" ([www.empoweringells.com/a18-tier-3-words/](http://www.empoweringells.com/a18-tier-3-words/))

I'd also recommend the following posts:

- "Talk-Read-Talk-Write: Creating a Language-Rich Classroom" ([www.empoweringells.com/29-trtw/](http://www.empoweringells.com/29-trtw/))
- "Teach ELLs to Deconstruct Writing Prompts" ([www.empoweringells.com/writing-prompts/](http://www.empoweringells.com/writing-prompts/))
- "Reading Aloud to EALs, Not Just for Little Ones" ([www.empoweringells.com/readalouds/](http://www.empoweringells.com/readalouds/))

As always, thanks for your support of your ELLs, their families and our teaching community, including the ESLC. If you have ideas or submissions for *Accent*, please e-mail me at [anniepyfung@gmail.com](mailto:anniepyfung@gmail.com). No contribution is too small or too big. Let's finish this school year off with much celebration of your and your kids' successes.

Keep in touch with the  
English as a Second  
Language Council



[www.facebook.com/ATAESLC](http://www.facebook.com/ATAESLC)



@ESLCATA

# Talk Time in the Classroom: A Review of Content-Area Conversations

by Samantha Tomlinson

*Content-Area Conversations: How to Plan Discussion-Based Lessons for Diverse Language Learners*

by Douglas Fisher, Nancy Frey and Carol Rothenberg

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), 2008

The ability to communicate thoughts, ideas and understandings is a vital skill for our students. Beginning English-language learners (ELLs) focus on the social skills of conversation and the vocabulary needed to communicate every day (basic interpersonal communication skills, or BICS), alongside learning the curricular content. Many teachers wonder how they can support their ELLs to help them increase their level of English-language proficiency.

*Content-Area Conversations: How to Plan Discussion-Based Lessons for Diverse Language Learners*, by Douglas Fisher, Nancy Frey and Carol Rothenberg, recommends that teachers support students in bridging the gap between social language and academic language through increasing their opportunities to engage in purposefully planned classroom talk that encourages thinking and the use of academic language.

Chapter 1 discusses the role language plays in learning and communicating ideas. The examples effectively demonstrate the type of talk that is dominant in the classroom and lead the reader to reflect on what types of talk may be more productive.

The next two chapters define academic discourse and provide content-specific examples to demonstrate the explicit use of academic vocabulary and language structures. Questions and tables provide direction for planning lessons that include

opportunities for purposeful talk. Content-specific exemplars from three grade-level perspectives are also provided. These chapters are particularly useful for gaining an understanding of how academic communication is structured and where to begin when building talk time into lessons.

Chapters 4 and 5 focus on creating and managing a physical environment that is conducive to collaborative talk. Classroom teachers will find these chapters particularly relevant, as the focus on managing talk time addresses some of the immediate concerns teachers have regarding classroom management and instructional time.

Chapter 6 discusses assessment. Assessment, particularly formative assessment, assists teachers in gathering evidence that reflects student progress and guides further instruction. With an intentional focus on language objectives, in addition to content objectives, teachers can observe progress in both English-language acquisition and curricular content. The book provides examples of assessment tools (such as a student oral-language observation matrix and a speaking checklist) and tips for evaluating a retell, which are helpful when looking for ways to support professional judgment and feedback on student progress.

The conclusion presents answers to the many *what if* questions I have asked myself and have had others ask me as we work to increase the opportunities for students to use academic language, beyond checking for comprehension responses. What if no one talks? What if everyone talks? How do I encourage talk and ensure that it is productive and purposeful for all my students?

*Content-Area Conversations* provides information and exemplars worthy of reflection and implementation.

# Conference 2018 Reflections

The ESLC's 2018 annual conference, with the theme "Empowering Learners: Upping Our Game and Inspiring Futures," was held November 2 and 3 in Edmonton.

## Conference Fun Facts

- 12 months of planning, discussing and preconference excitement
- 227 registered delegates, from 24 school boards across Alberta
- 14 groups that organized to get the group discount
- 12 members of our ESLC executive in attendance (who also attended a few meetings)
- 27 sessions offered by 29 speakers, including our two keynote speakers and two amazing young junior high students from Edmonton
- Four meals, two coffee breaks, an annual general meeting (AGM) and a Friday pre-dinner social
- 25 hosts to introduce our sessions and five volunteers running the registration tables over two days
- 16 publishers, vendors and agencies hosting tables, with \$2,270 in coupons for our delegates to spend
- More than 10 businesses and organizations contributing to door prizes and supporting our conference (thank you!)
- Welcoming Chateau Lacombe Hotel staff and Evolution AV staff, as well as a warm and inviting space
- And an unexpected dump of snow on Friday morning

## Acknowledgements

We'd like to thank the following people:

- Our keynote speakers—Keith Folse and Nisreen Baker. Folse, a researcher, author, professor and teacher, offered four sessions. He has generously shared his presentations for posting on the ESLC website ([www.eslcata.com](http://www.eslcata.com)), and he now loves Canada after his holiday and meeting all of us. Baker, a local filmmaker, shared her personal story through visuals and through her words. *Things Arab Men Say* is available at [www.nfb.ca/film/things\\_arab\\_men\\_say/](http://www.nfb.ca/film/things_arab_men_say/).

- Student speakers Rajaa Mayil and Rima Ghanem, from Mary Butterworth School in Edmonton. These students shared their personal stories and experiences of moving from their home country to Canada. They inspired us and made us proud of our work supporting ESL students in this province.
- Our wonderful session speakers—Marilyn Abbott, Jeannette Austin-Odina, Stephanie Dodyk, Samantha Dover, Laurie Faber, Karen Filewych, Donna Freeman, Lorene Gooding, Taraff Haymour, J J Kennedy, Ziya Khandani, Kent Lee, Leonora Macy, Donna Mondor, Jayashree Ramaswami, Sabrina Rawji, Gail Reid, Alexis Renwick, Carrie Riddle, Caterina Rylance, Cora-Leah Schmitt, Robyn Shewchuk, Ciara Smith, Jordan Tran, Gregory Tweedie, Jacqueline Werstiuk and Joan Woodlock. It is always great to find out what is happening across the province, and when you share your work, it helps us all to up our game. We know that having to present is less relaxing than just attending the conference, but please know that without you there would be no conference. Also, thank you to those of you who shared your presentations for posting on the ESLC website. If you'd still like to share yours, please send your presentation to [nancy.musica@shaw.ca](mailto:nancy.musica@shaw.ca).
- Our volunteers—Jelena Radcliffe, Val Behiels, Joyce Purdy and Sahra Ahmed (who ran out on the snowy Friday morning to get us some replacement projectors—graciously lent to us by Edmonton Public Schools). Thanks so much for volunteering your time at our registration table.
- And, of course, our ESLC executive and the Conference 2018 committee—Tracey Allan, Annie Fung, Sherry Langland, Jill Munro, Nancy Musica and Rana Salame. Thanks for stepping up, providing your input and expertise, giving your time, and working so hard to plan a great event for our members. These people deserve the last word, so here are a few reflections from our committee members—as we begin to think about the next ESLC conference. (And, yes, some conference planners have already stepped up!)

## Reflections

### From the Conference Codirectors

by Rana Salame

The greatest part of helping to plan the 2018 ESLC conference was working closely with an amazing and knowledgeable team, from whom I learned a lot. I also enjoyed reading session proposals and getting to know the speakers.

As for the challenges, choosing speakers from a long list of incredible and inspiring people in our community was hard. The timeline was also a challenge, as I felt that we didn't have sufficient time just before the conference to finalize last-minute details.

Overall, though, it was a remarkable conference, and I am proud of our team's achievement. For the next conference, I would love to see Edmonton fashion designer Wedad Amiri as a speaker.

I would definitely recommend getting involved with the ESLC and attending the conference, because it is a one-of-a-kind learning experience and very rewarding.

by Nancy Musica

Planning the conference was like planning a big party—with a little extra pressure! Not knowing how many people to plan for, finding relevant and amazing speakers, wondering about the weather (which so often causes us trouble), breaking even financially and keeping track of so many details—these were just a few of the factors that kept us up late. It can be fun to spend other people's money—but also scary!

Seeing it all come together—watching as people came forward to volunteer, present and organize group registrations, as well as to enjoy the sessions, the food, the market and the socializing—was really something. It was a team effort. I'd especially like to thank our ESLC executive members; Cheryl O'Brien, from the ATA; our keynote and session speakers (there'd be no conference without them); and, of course, all the delegates who made the effort to come and be a part of it all.

For the next conference, I'd love to see some mini skills (longer) sessions, as well as informal poster sessions and maybe even a panel discussion.

Helping out on the ESLC has allowed me to meet teachers across Alberta who work in the field of ESL, which has broadened my knowledge and awareness of the amazing work being done to support our students in this province.

### From the Conference Treasurer

by Sherry Langland

The best thing about helping to plan the 2018 ESLC conference was the keynote speaker—Keith Folse. The challenging part was deciding which sessions to attend. We had so many great ones to choose from.

Next year I would love to see a new date set for the conference that would not involve travel in the winter.

I'd recommend getting involved with the ESLC because of the PD opportunities, as well as the opportunity to build a network of ESL professionals.

### From the Publications Director

by Annie Fung

Oh, the power of caffeine and adrenaline and almost nightly e-mails and texts at 1 AM about this and that! Sometimes planning the conference was stressful work, but it was a great opportunity to learn from my peers and our excellent guest speakers.

Meeting the legendary Keith Folse was wonderful—he was so knowledgeable and approachable. I'm a grammar geek, and his enthusiasm sparked my interest in learning how I can get my own students (and perhaps fellow teachers) excited about grammar.

Thank you to those out-of-towners who came in for our wine-and-cheese social and stayed to help us with last-minute tasks. We love all of you, and that's why we do this work.

Please do join us for next year's conference. Better yet, join the ESLC, as well. It's where the action and the fun are—hence, the caffeine and adrenaline!

# Connecting Disciplinary Literacy to English-Language Development for ELLs

by Joan Miles

For many years, teachers in the core content areas and complementary subjects, when asked to provide explicit English-language instruction for English-language learners (ELLs) in their classes, often protested that they were ill-equipped to do so, having had little or no training in areas such as reading comprehension, vocabulary development, grammar and sentence structure. In many ways, of course, they were right! Universities had provided them with more than adequate instruction in the disciplinary content they were expected to relay to their students but little in the way of preparation to teach the literacies needed by students in order for them to meaningfully access that content. Only in recent years has the focus on disciplinary literacy risen to the surface, offering content-area teachers a clearer understanding of their role, as educators, in incorporating “the use of reading, reasoning, investigating, speaking, and writing to learn and form complex content knowledge appropriate to [their] particular discipline” (McConachie and Petrosky 2009, 16).

No matter what the content area—math, English, art or culinary arts—each subject has a disciplinary literacy that we, as teachers, must take the time to make visible for students.<sup>1</sup> First, though, it behooves us to take a step back and think about what it is that makes certain disciplines difficult for learners. For a subject like English, it might be the need for a broad understanding of Western-based culture, or the ability to engage in a wide variety of writing genres, such as poetry, essays and short stories. In social studies, it might be the ability to adopt a certain perspective in a debate, or answer open-ended questions that rely on the interpretation of primary and secondary sources, with an awareness of possible bias. In math, students need to delve deeply into word problems, going beyond simply reading for information in order to understand what

piece of the puzzle they are being asked to solve. The sciences, like other subject areas, have precise technical vocabulary that students are required to understand and use, and learners are frequently asked to visually represent data, using charts, graphs or illustrations. These tasks can prove daunting for many students, but they pose special concerns for ELLs, who are often integrated into mainstream classes before they have developed sufficient English-language proficiency to fully and meaningfully engage with the content.

In a study I completed in 2014, ELL students in a large urban high school frequently spoke of their frustrations with coursework in inclusive settings. They spoke of the challenge of mastering academic vocabulary, their lack of familiarity with discourse processes that looked different in their home countries (such as structuring a paragraph or an essay) and the struggle to express themselves clearly to classmates and teachers, especially during group work and class presentations. One student confided, “Sometimes I just wanna quit school ’cause I just feel like it’s gonna make me cry. Like, I just don’t get it sometimes, and then, you know. I just know I can’t quit.” These words clearly illustrate the heartbreak some students experience when they do not have a clear and accessible entry point to the content they are expected to learn.

So what can be done to help students develop academic language skills that will facilitate their participation in classroom activities in the various content areas? In other words, how do we unlock text for ELLs? Here are a few suggestions:

- When unpacking visuals, such as political cartoons, understand that where native English speakers may be able to summarize the information the visual text provides, or take a stance on the artist’s point of view, ELLs often need to work at the level of simply understanding symbols and cultural referents.

They may need to identify and learn the names of objects in the picture, understand the significance of certain colours, be provided with background information, or interpret words and labels that are significant to the message. Help students build bridges to understanding so that they can eventually begin to tackle some of the bigger questions.

- Use collaborative reading strategies to make text more comprehensible to ELLs. Lent (2016, 39) suggests that as a result of the emphasis on complex text within disciplines, “it is more important than ever for students of all ages to hear text being read aloud.” This is especially true for ELLs. Any collaborative strategy that allows students to listen, read aloud, synthesize, summarize, discuss, annotate and question will be helpful in supporting reading comprehension.
- Anticipate and plan for language challenges by considering the vocabulary, grammar and sentence construction within the text. According to Dutro and Moran (2003), front-loading for students by preteaching some of these challenging linguistic components will help make text more comprehensible for students. Terms related to academic thinking (such as *define*, *summarize* and *explain*), discussion phrases (such as “I see your point” and “I disagree”), and cohesive devices (such as *nevertheless*, *however* and *in addition*) are transferable words and phrases that, once learned, will serve students well across all disciplines.
- Ensure comprehensible input (Cummins and Early 2015). It is important to gauge students’ levels of understanding in order to provide “just right” levels of support. Folse (2004) reminds us, however, to remain aware that in attempting to make text more comprehensible, we should be cautious about reducing vocabulary to phrasal verbs, which—while common in English—are challenging for speakers of other languages. Folse attributes these challenges to the fact that phrasal verbs are “rarely transparent in meaning” (p 6). For example, *to put on* can mean *to get dressed*, whereas *to put off* does not mean *to get undressed* but, rather, *to postpone*.
- Know the language function (summarizing, describing, sequencing and so on) that students

are required to use in order to accomplish the learning task (Dutro and Moran 2003). Provide sentence frames and other scaffolds (such as visuals, graphic organizers and rich contextual information) to help students structure their responses to questions.

- Provide daily opportunities for active inclusion. In other words, ensure that you structure opportunities for students to talk about content in pairs or small groups. Be aware that cooperative learning presents many pitfalls for ELLs (such as fast-paced and complex interactions, idiomatic language, lack of familiarity with the cultural rules for discourse, and unreliable peer translation), so expectations for how to work in a group must be made clear to everyone in the class.
- Use the teachable moment to draw attention to various aspects of language formation, such as cadence, pronunciation, and the use of idiomatic or vernacular expressions in English.

The key point to take away is that disciplinary literacy and English-language development for ELLs overlap in several key areas. Both require students to engage in the work of the discipline through writing and speaking, and both ask students to engage in critical, higher-order thinking in order to promote deep learning. Both focus on the specific way that language is used in a particular content area to accomplish a given purpose, and both recommend front-loading vocabulary to enable students to more easily access learning. Both also use a variety of strategies, such as graphic organizers and collaborative reading, to assist students in understanding content and managing information. Finally, regardless of where each student is in relation to the task, both require that tasks should be engaging, instruction should be explicit, and teachers should provide frequent opportunities for students to practise and apply new language in meaningful contexts (Lent 2016).

If we look at course content through the lens of disciplinary literacy, add an English-language-development filter to that lens and then sharpen the image with our own understanding of how students learn, we will more clearly see the path toward providing less stressful, more meaningful and more inclusive classroom experiences for ELLs.

## Note

1. For further information about disciplinary literacies in each core content area, refer to Lent (2016).

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# President's Message

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response, the ESLC has been working hard to create a new brochure focused on providing information for teachers of refugee learners. Please watch for this brochure in the coming months. Meanwhile, if you are interested in learning more about working with vulnerable newcomers to Canada, visit [www.teachingrefugees.com](http://www.teachingrefugees.com) for information and resources that will both enlighten and support you in this critical undertaking.

As always, much work lies ahead. That work will be driven by the collective wisdom of many stakeholders (you included) who provide the inspiration, direction and guidance for the tasks the council undertakes. Converting ideas into actions requires the selfless dedication of many volunteers who serve on the council. I would be remiss, therefore, if I did not offer a few words of thanks to the executive members and table officers who offer their time in support of ELL teachers across Alberta. I would especially like to thank those who have recently left the council after many years of service. First, our gratitude to Dianne Leong-Fortier, who served as ESLC president for 2017/18 and was previously our

webmaster. Dianne worked extremely hard, providing wonderful leadership for the team. Thanks also to Christine Oliver, who served as our trusted and talented treasurer; to Joana Dodsall and JoAnne Snihurowych, our hard-working members at large for the Calgary and Edmonton areas, respectively; and to Rachel Reynolds, who did remarkable work researching and setting up our new website. To all of you, we appreciate your time, your creativity and your passion for ESL. You have made a difference!

As we move forward, we welcome those who have recently joined the executive, and we extend an invitation to those of you who are passionate about ESL to get involved in whatever way makes the most sense for you. That involvement might take the form of writing an article for *Accent*, submitting a proposal to present at our next conference or taking an even more active role by applying for one of the available positions on the council executive. Your expertise is valued and should be celebrated! Meanwhile, enjoy the rest of the school year, and remember to visit our website often for information, resources and upcoming PD opportunities.

# Science and ELLs

*A version of this article was previously published in the ESLC's Monthly Focus Archives on November 2, 2016 (www.eslcata.com/science-and-ell/).*

In her article “Effective Strategies for Teaching Science Vocabulary,” Sarah J Carrier (2011) reminds us that “in order for students to develop scientific literacy, they need to gain a knowledge of science content and practice scientific habits of mind. This is impossible without knowledge of science vocabulary.”

Here are some resources for helping English-language learners (ELLs) with science vocabulary.

## Science Experiments

### The Best Sources of Ideas for Simple Classroom Science Experiments

<http://larryferlazzo.edublogs.org/2009/05/31/the-best-sources-of-ideas-for-simple-classroom-science-experiments/>

Larry Ferlazzo shares resources for simple science experiments to use with ELLs. He states, “Simple classroom science experiments are a great way for English Language Learners to develop language skills—through the speaking with a partner that’s necessary to do the experiment, through the listening needed to understand directions, through the writing done to record results and to afterward describe what they did, and through the reading that occurs [in] the Language Experience Approach (www.cal.org/caela/esl\_resources/digests/LEA.html) and as a class [to] write a chronology of events together on a whiteboard.”

## Science Games

### Science Vocabulary Hangman

<http://education.jlab.org/vocabhangman/>

In this game, the computer randomly selects a science term. Students then discover what the word is by guessing which letters are in it. Teachers can add their own vocabulary words for their class.

## School Science: Environmental Science Education Quiz Activities and Games

[www.sylvum.com/squizzes/science/](http://www.sylvum.com/squizzes/science/)

This website provides quizzes on various science topics, along with the recommended grades and ages.

## Science Text for ELLs

### Content Essentials for Science

<http://ecommerce-prod.mheducation.com.s3.amazonaws.com/unitas/school/program/content-essentials-for-science/content-essentials-toc.pdf>

Content Essentials for Science is a series of student handbooks and tools to help students learn science vocabulary and content.

## Science Activities

### ESL Printables Science Worksheets

[www.eslprintables.com/vocabulary\\_worksheets/science/](http://www.eslprintables.com/vocabulary_worksheets/science/)

ESL Printables offers a place for English-language teachers to exchange resources (worksheets, lesson plans, activities and so on). Printable worksheets and activities for teaching science to ELLs (children, teenagers and adults) are available at the levels of beginner, elementary, intermediate and advanced. They have all been designed by English-language teachers.

## Related Websites

### Strategies for Teaching Science to ELLs

[www.csun.edu/science/ref/language/teaching-ell.html](http://www.csun.edu/science/ref/language/teaching-ell.html)

### Larry Ferlazzo’s Science Links for ELLs

<http://larryferlazzo.com/eslscience.html>

## Reference

Carrier, S J. 2011. “Effective Strategies for Teaching Science Vocabulary.” LEARN North Carolina: UNC-Chapel Hill, NC. Also available at [www.researchgate.net/profile/Reza\\_Biria/post/Which\\_models\\_of\\_teaching\\_professionally-oriented\\_lexics\\_vocabulary\\_can\\_you\\_offer/attachment/59d63da479197b807799a694/AS%3A420752668020736%401477326661573/download/Effective+strategies+for+teaching+science+vocabulary.pdf](http://www.researchgate.net/profile/Reza_Biria/post/Which_models_of_teaching_professionally-oriented_lexics_vocabulary_can_you_offer/attachment/59d63da479197b807799a694/AS%3A420752668020736%401477326661573/download/Effective+strategies+for+teaching+science+vocabulary.pdf) (accessed May 15, 2019).

# Notes from the PD Director South

by Samantha Tomlinson



The ESLC acts as an advocate on behalf of students learning English as a second language and seeks to constantly improve and promote the teaching of English as a second or additional language.

What have we been up to? Exactly that!

A team of ESLC members were honoured to present in October at the Beginning Teachers' Conference and in February at the Palliser District Teachers' Convention, both in Calgary. Our sessions focused on strategies to support English-language learners in the classroom and welcomed over 75 participants. Thank you to all who attended!

In November, Mount Royal University, in Calgary, invited us to present a session for preservice educational assistants, many of whom aspire to graduate with an education degree. They welcomed us again in January to a preservice carousel for ATA

specialist councils. Both events were a fantastic way to demonstrate the mission of the ESLC and to advocate for our students.

As the PD director for the southern region, I find feedback from members very valuable when considering PD opportunities. Feedback from a variety of sources—including questions and conversations at tables we set up at events (such as the preservice carousel), exit slips and feedback surveys from PD sessions, information from the ESLC members at large (MALs), and e-mails sent to the PD director south address—helped drive many of our past PD offerings. Your voice as an ESLC member matters. If you are aware of an upcoming conference, if you know of a speaker you'd like to see, or if you'd like to offer or attend a certain PD opportunity, please contact us at [PDDirectorSouth@eslcata.com](mailto:PDDirectorSouth@eslcata.com).

Watch for upcoming PD opportunities on the ESLC website ([www.eslcata.com](http://www.eslcata.com)). Share this information with your colleagues and invite them to become members of the ESLC!

# Reports from Members at Large

## Calgary and Area

by Lisa Smith

### What's New for Spring 2019

- I Can Statements have been developed by Alberta Education for elementary learners. They are available at [www.learnalberta.ca/content/eslapb/i\\_can.html](http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/eslapb/i_can.html). Teachers can use these statements to better communicate to students and parents the outcomes outlined in the Alberta K–12 ESL Proficiency Benchmarks. Teachers are encouraged to share the ways they use these statements to improve ESL instruction and programming.

### What to Watch For

- Keep an eye out for upcoming ESLC PD opportunities in Calgary.
- Past wine-and-cheese events have offered members the opportunity to share their wide experiences. Watch for another chance to collaborate with your colleagues this spring in Calgary.
- Suggestions for topics or PD formats that effectively support ELL instruction are welcome. Teacher input provides us with essential guidance for how we can best offer support and inspiration.

For further information, check out the ESLC website ([www.eslcata.com](http://www.eslcata.com)).

Questions or suggestions? Please contact me at [MALCalgaryArea2@eslcata.com](mailto:MALCalgaryArea2@eslcata.com).

## Southern Alberta

by Daphne Sander

The ESLC's Southern Alberta Regional comprises several school districts serving ELLs in both rural and urban communities. Each school district has a unique profile, and we celebrate the diversity of our ELLs, including Low German Mennonite, Hutterite, Indigenous, refugee, and foreign- and Canadian-born students.

Our school districts are united in our goal to provide the best possible education for our students. Therefore, several PD and community networking opportunities are offered throughout the region. For example, ESL personnel from school districts throughout southern Alberta meet twice a year to discuss topics of common interest. The meetings are hosted by school districts throughout the region, allowing representatives to see the individuality of each district.

Other meaningful PD has included sessions offered through the Southern Alberta Professional Development Consortium (SAPDC), such as the sessions Using ESL Benchmarks to Plan for Meaningful Instruction and Supporting the ELL in the Writing Workshop. Sessions offered through the South Western Alberta Teachers' Convention Association (SWATCA) and the Southeastern Alberta Teachers' Convention Association (SEATCA) have also helped inform our practice and enabled us to collaborate with others who share our passion for working with ELLs.

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780-447-9429 (direct)

780-699-9311 (cell, available any time)



The Alberta Teachers' Association

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Complete information regarding the English as a Second Language Council executive is available on the council's website at [www.eslcata.com](http://www.eslcata.com).

## JOIN ESLC

Being an ESLC member has many perks.

- Connection to Alberta Education
- Networking with like-minded professionals
- PD opportunities
- Some meetings held via Skype
- Information to help you with your professional practice
- Opportunity to advocate at a provincial level for our learners
- All expenses covered

**We're super-fun!**

If you are interested in joining the ESLC, please visit the ESLC website at [www.eslcata.com](http://www.eslcata.com).



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# THE FACE OF EDUCATION

## We believe in public education

The Alberta Teachers' Association is encouraging teachers, parents and other concerned citizens to show their support for public education by participating in the Pledge for Public Education campaign.

Public education provides students from all backgrounds with learning experiences to discover and develop their potential, their passions and their gifts, allowing them to make significant contributions to their communities.

Public education prepares learners for life, and Alberta's public education system\* is widely recognized as one of the best systems in the world.

We believe in public education, and we believe in providing students with the best opportunities for success.

## How can you support the pledge?

1. Visit [www.IBelieveInPublicEd.ca](http://www.IBelieveInPublicEd.ca) and add your name.
2. Encourage your colleagues, friends and family to sign on.
3. Share your support for the pledge on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, using #IBelieveInPublicEd.

## What's next?

This fall we are collecting the names and e-mail contacts for supporters who believe in public education and support small class sizes, supports for special needs, full-day kindergarten and access to counselling services. Later, we will contact supporters with information about actions they can take to advocate for students and to voice their support for public education.

Stay tuned for more information as the campaign rolls out.

\* In Alberta, public education refers to public, separate and francophone schools.

## The pledge for public education

- I believe all students should be able to learn in small-sized classes.
- I believe all students with special learning needs should receive the supports and resources they require for success.
- I believe all students should have the opportunity to benefit from fully funded junior kindergarten and full-day kindergarten programs.
- I believe all students should have access to a teacher-certificated school counsellor in their school.

**I believe in public education**

[iBelieveInPublicEd.ca](http://iBelieveInPublicEd.ca)



The Alberta Teachers' Association

