



Accent

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President's Message

by Joan Miles



By now you are well into the new school year. Administrators are undoubtedly looking forward to a year free of dedicated infirmary spaces, class quarantines and statistics on COVID-related absences. For classroom teachers and English as a second language (ESL) assistants, hopes are high that this year will mark a return to some of the things reluctantly set aside in March 2020. This school year, it will be wonderful to see the entire faces of our students and not have to rely on eye recognition, to be able to configure students' desks in ways other than straight rows spaced two metres apart, and to once again bring in guest speakers or, better yet, take students on trips out in the field to capitalize on the benefits of experiential learning. And if we

never hear the word *pivot* again, it will be too soon!

Obviously, the skills we honed through the pandemic will not be lost. Our enhanced technology capabilities can now be blended with the tried-and-true strategies associated with in-person learning to create classrooms that are more effective and inclusive than ever before—proof, perhaps, that every cloud does, indeed, have a silver lining!

Naturally, we will have new concerns to address in the year ahead. Classroom populations are more complex than ever, and teachers will be challenged to find ways to narrow the gaps in both academic and social skills among students while also striving to adhere to the program of studies. Experienced teachers will need to dust off their tool kits and become reacquainted with some favourite pre-pandemic strategies, while teachers new to the profession in the last two years may find themselves on yet another steep learning curve. It will take time, patience and cooperation to get students and staff all back on the same page, but it will happen, and the English as a Second Language Council (ESLC) is here to help!

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As a specialist council of the Alberta Teachers' Association, the ESLC supports the wonderful work classroom teachers across the province are doing on behalf of English-language learners (ELLs) through its professional learning initiatives. Through the pandemic, we have been creative in looking for opportunities to bring knowledge to teachers using various digital platforms. Our publications director, Annie Fung, delivered tasty ESL Tidbits to keep members informed about the various events planned by our executive team. One of these offerings was a free series designed specifically for our ESLC membership by Apple, in consultation with our professional development committee. Another event was a session on culturally responsive classrooms, presented by Diane Staehr Fenner, president of SupportEd. This presentation was generously sponsored by a friend of the ESLC who wishes to remain anonymous.

Our most anticipated event of the year, however, was our long-awaited in-person conference, held May 6–8 in Canmore. Conference 2022: “Staying Ahead of the Curve” was the culmination of three years of work by a small committee of dedicated volunteers, led by ESLC treasurer and conference chair Diane Pham. Our original lineup of speakers and presenters for March 2020 remained committed to our event for two years, weathering uncertainties, cancellations and rebookings. To them, we owe our greatest thanks. In the end, delegates were rewarded with a lovely spring weekend in the Rockies, where collaborative learning, engaging discussions with colleagues and much-needed self-care were the focus. I would like to thank Robert Allan, Stephanie Gee, Hetty Roessingh, Lisa Smith, Tamara Ulanicki and Brock Wojtalewicz for working alongside of us to bring the conference to fruition. I would also like to acknowledge Harry Pham, Eugene Miles and Gary Toy for additional support on the weekend of the conference.

With the successful completion of our first in-person conference since the pandemic began, we are now officially on a roll! Planning for our next conference, to be held in spring 2023, is under way, led by conference director Lisa Smith. Watch for updates and registration information in *Accent* or on the ESLC website (www.eslcata.com).

Finally, we held our annual general meeting in Red Deer on Sunday, October 23, followed by a meeting of the new executive. A list of the 2022/23 executive is included in this issue.

I will close by offering a final thank you to the 2021/22 ESLC executive committee:

- Gaylene Mackay, Diane Pham, Elissa Corsi and Kathy Hoehn (table officers)
- Heather Kennedy (webmaster)
- Annie Fung (publications director)
- Nancy Musica, Laura Weselowski and Lisa Smith (PD directors)
- Amanda Caporicci, Moe Rachid, Purnima Lindsay, Paulina Nowak, Tracey Allan, Yousra Badr and Sarah Semaine (members at large)
- Laura-Lee Toews (Alberta Colony Educators special interest group liaison)

As always, this team of dedicated professionals has done an outstanding job of advocating for ESL teachers, despite the many challenges of the past year.

To all of you, I speak on behalf of the ESLC executive in wishing you a rewarding year of teaching and professional learning. We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events!



The outgoing 2021/22 ESLC executive at Conference 2022 in Canmore

Editor's Corner

by Annie Fung



Greetings from the ESLC! We hope you've had a wonderful start to your school year, meeting many new students and getting reacquainted with those you've already worked with.

Seeing many of you in 3-D at our conference in Canmore in May was a highlight of the last school year. Even if you were not there, let's take this moment to celebrate how much we were able to accomplish, collectively and individually, during the peaks of the pandemic. With the new school year, let's reignite our hopes and collaborative efforts but also honour the need to slow down for ourselves once in a while.

You may be aware that Alberta Education has put together the draft *Alberta K–12 English as an Additional Language (EAL) Proficiency Benchmarks* (Benchmarks 2.0). The draft is now available in the Supporting English Language Learners section of the LearnAlberta website (www.learnalberta.ca/content/eslapb/). The ESLC will be focused on finding ways to help you become familiar with these new guidelines. At our annual general meeting in Red Deer on October 23, Kathy Salmon, who worked on the guidelines, gave our members a preview of good old 2.0 and a chance to ask questions.

This issue of *Accent* includes articles to supplement your other resources for ESL teaching.

I really enjoyed Joan Miles's informative and touching piece on her pysanky-making fundraiser at the ESLC conference. What a meaningful way to

spend Mother's Day while helping local Ukrainian newcomers!

Ever feel worried about your ELLs moving on to university and how their developing academic language skills may affect their learning in competitive and fast-paced courses? You will likely be interested in Hetty Roessingh's article on the ESLC's resolution to advocate for Alberta Education to provide our high school ELLs with "an alternative, parallel, and academically pragmatic track through the ELA Program of Studies" that "would be geared to meet the needs of students who are oriented towards STEM and/or Business-focused study at the Post-secondary level."

Looking for some fun ideas for using technology? Check out Tracey Allan's discussion about how she uses TikTok in the classroom to entice her ELLs to use their language skills while building community and confidence in using English.

In an article reprinted from *TESOL Connections*, Raichle Farrelly offers a thought-provoking discussion about the labels we use around English-language learning and learners. This is very timely, because Alberta Education will be shifting from the term *English as a second language (ESL)* to *English as an additional language (EAL)* in Benchmarks 2.0.

Please share *Accent* with your colleagues! Also, encourage them to join the ESLC. If you wish to share a story or tips for working with ELLs, please contact me at anniepyfung@gmail.com. There is so much expertise around the province! You all make us the ESLC!

As I wrote in the Fall 2021 issue, "I wish you the best this coming school year. Savour those giggles and smiles from your kiddos, and find tiny ways to pamper yourselves—and, most of all, stay well!"

2022/23 ESLC Executive

At the ESLC annual general meeting on October 23, 2022, the membership elected a new executive for 2022/23.

President—Joan Miles

President-elect—Gaylene Mackay

Treasurer—Diane Pham

Secretary—Angela Skene

PD director North—Nancy Musica

PD director Central—Sarah Semaine

PD director Edmonton—Youssra Badr

PD director South—Vacant

PD director Calgary and Conference 2023 director—Lisa Smith

Conference 2023/24 director—Vacant

Publications director—Annie Fung

Webmaster—Heather Kennedy

ATA staff advisor—Christien Perrault

Provincial Executive Council liaison—Peter Mackay

Alberta Education representative—Sharon Seward

If you are interested in joining the executive, visit www.eslcata.com/council-executives/ and apply for a vacant position.

The ESLC thanks all of those who have served on the executive over the years.



English as a Second Language Council
Specialist Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association

ESLC Conference 2023: Registration Opening Soon!!

Language: Bridging Past, Present and Future

Fairmont Lake Louise Hotel: May, 5-7 2023



An Easter Egg for Maya

by Joan Miles

May 8, 2022. Mother's Day. The ESLC conference at the Malcolm Hotel in Canmore was wrapping up with several wellness events aimed at helping teachers regain some of the equilibrium lost over two years of personal and professional upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

I was leading a session in a beautiful room with high glass windows and a lovely view of the Rocky Mountains. Inside the room were 13 participants—children and adults—none of whom were contemplating the view. Their heads were down, their voices were still, and their eyes were firmly fixed on the fragile works of art taking shape under their steady fingers. They were learning the traditional method of making pysanky—Ukrainian Easter eggs.

This event was a late addition to the conference schedule, born of my interest in a global conflict that has personal significance for me. Like many other Albertans, I am the grandchild of Ukrainian immigrants who left their homeland in the 1920s, when Ukraine was experiencing a brief respite from its position at the centre of a tug-of-war between Poland, Austria and Russia—countries all vying for control over an area of land coveted for its rich agricultural resources.

As young adults, my grandparents on both sides arrived by sea at Pier 21, in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and made their way west to Alberta, where they worked hard, learned English and became part of the Canadian mosaic. It wasn't an easy time for

Ukrainian immigrants, but my transplanted ancestors made a successful living in their new country, and they nurtured their cultural roots so that succeeding generations had a firm foundation of Ukrainian music, language, traditions, art and, of course, food on which to thrive.

As a child, I went to Ukrainian school on Saturdays, attended a Ukrainian Greek Orthodox church, and was taught basic traditional dance steps and folk songs. My maternal grandmother grew her

own vegetables, including beets for borscht and cabbage for sauerkraut. She even cultivated poppies so that she could harvest the seeds that formed the basis of so many delicious Ukrainian desserts. She passed down her culinary traditions to her daughters (my mother and my aunt), who, in turn, made every effort to pass them down to me.



Thus, when the war between Ukraine and Russia erupted on February 24, 2022, it hit surprisingly close to home. I felt a weight in my heart and a yearning to help, but I was at a loss to know exactly what to do. I had neither the space nor the resources to offer shelter to a fleeing family, and it was difficult to know which of the many aid organizations to support, or where donations would have the greatest impact. I decided to look closer to home for a way to be of service. I proposed the idea of a pysanky-making session at the ESLC conference as a fundraiser for Ukrainian refugees, and I had one particular refugee in mind.

Several years ago, I taught LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) classes for adult ELLs. One of my students was a lovely young Ukrainian woman named Olga. We stayed in touch over the years, and not long ago, she reached out to ask me if I would help her older brother, Andriy, improve his English-language proficiency. I was happy to help, and over the next year or two, Andriy and I met about once a week to converse, read and write in English. Through our work together, I came to know about his brothers and sisters; his parents; his talented wife, Marina; and their two wonderful children, Alex and Matthew.

The eruption of full-out war between Russia and Ukraine came as an immense shock. Andriy and Marina still had friends and family in Ukraine, so our conversations began to focus on Andriy's grave concerns about their safety. Andriy's aunts live in Mykolaiv, which is close to the Black Sea, and one of his brothers, along with his wife and children, resides in Ivano-Frankivsk—a city with a military airport in the western part of Ukraine. For obvious reasons, both locations were potentially desirable acquisition targets for the Russian government, so the threat to those loved ones was real.

Marina was equally concerned about her own relatives. Until recently, Ivano-Frankivsk was also home to her mother, Maya; however, when the war started, Maya and her own mother (Marina's grandmother) made a rapid decision to evacuate. They moved so quickly that they did not even take the time to pack their belongings, abandoning their homes and leaving with not much more than the clothes on their backs.

Through a complicated network of friends and relatives in various countries, their transportation to the border between Ukraine and Poland was arranged. A trip that would normally take three to four hours stretched into an 18-hour journey as their vehicle blended into the surge of humanity straining at a snail's pace toward the promise of safety.

Maya and her mother eventually crossed the border by bus near the city of Lviv. There, they were warmly greeted by Polish citizens and foreign volunteers who were eager to provide the Ukrainian refugees with food, clothing and shelter. For more

than a month, the two women lived free of charge in an apartment in Krakow.

Despite the great kindness they were shown, however, they remained in a state of shock for some time. Only days before, they had been safe and living a normal life in a city they thought they would never leave. Then, suddenly, they were rudderless in an unfamiliar country, with an uncertain future ahead of them. To pass the time, they walked the streets of Krakow and did their best to adjust to their new surroundings. Thankfully, there is a degree of familiarity between the cultures. Maya's mother speaks Polish well, so she was able to communicate with the local people, who were very helpful to them in their time of need.

For Maya's mother, Poland represented a final destination. Her granddaughter there has taken her in while she waits for the war to end in the hope that she can eventually return home. She is too old, she said, to travel to a country where she would have to learn another language and adjust to a different culture.

For Maya, however, another option existed. Andriy and Marina were anxious for her to join them in Canada, and the Canadian government had generously created a window of opportunity for her to do so.

It took about a month for Maya's visa to be processed in Warsaw. When all of her documents were in hand, she bid her mother goodbye and started the next leg of her journey alone. This was another stressful experience added to an already traumatic situation. The plan was for Maya to fly to Paris, where she would connect with one of Andriy's sisters, who was returning to Canada from a trip abroad. Maya could speak neither French nor English, however, so when she arrived in Paris, she was at a loss. She became disoriented in the airport and was unable to communicate with the local authorities. She had to show her documents to several airport workers before she found someone who was able to help her locate Andriy's sister. It was an emotional reunion.

With family now at her side, the rest of the journey progressed smoothly. Maya arrived safely in Calgary and now lives with Marina and Andriy in their basement suite. She is gradually learning

English and adjusting to her new life. Andriy says that she experiences waves of sadness, but modern technology has allowed her to remain in contact with loved ones in Poland and Ukraine, and she is happy and grateful to be safe and spending time with her daughter and grandchildren.

Maya's experience is just one of many similar stories. It is also why I want to sincerely thank those who joined me on May 8 to learn the art of pysanky. Pysanky are more than just pretty eggs. Each design is a combination of colours and symbols that carry significant meaning. The pattern we chose, while simple, may be interpreted as a chronicle of Maya's experience, as well as a message of hope to her and the many other refugees who have made the difficult journey from Ukraine to Canada. The dots in the pattern are said to represent tears—perhaps those shed for a once beautiful land now torn apart by war.



The eight-petaled “empty rose” signifies love, charity and goodwill—a tribute to the kindness of the strangers who helped Maya and her mother throughout their journey to Poland and beyond. The sun is both a symbol of growth and a wish for good fortune—hope for new beginnings and happier days ahead. Finally, the multiple colours used in the design serve a dual purpose: they are necessary for creating beautiful contrasts, but, taken together, they also represent family, happiness, peace and love—all

things that Maya has been fortunate to find in her new home in Calgary.

Designs are symbolic, but generosity is tangible. Both are meaningful. Maya arrived in Canada with only the few items she was able to carry out of Ukraine, so she and the family sponsoring her sincerely appreciated the donation raised from the pysanky-making session. On May 8, a day dedicated to honouring mothers, the generosity of strangers who came together to learn more about a beautiful cultural art form brought a little joy to one special Ukrainian mother in need.

Keep in touch with the English as a Second Language Council



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ESLC Resolution for Revamping High School ELA Programs: Background

by Hetty Roessingh

At the December 11, 2021, ESLC annual general meeting, the executive unanimously supported a resolution advanced by Joan Miles, ESLC president, and Hetty Roessingh, professor emerita at the Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary. The resolution involves the design and development of an alternative, academically rigorous progression of English for academic purposes (EAP) through high school English language arts (ELA) programs:

Be it resolved that Alberta Education design and develop an alternative, parallel, and academically pragmatic track through the ELA Program of Studies. This academically rigorous track would be geared to meet the needs of students who are oriented towards STEM and/or Business-focused study at the Post-secondary level.

In a series of short articles for *Accent*, we will provide background information about the resolution and its research underpinnings, the proposed sequence of courses, the curriculum design, implications for classroom practice, and future research that needs to be conducted.

We encourage ESLC members to familiarize yourselves with this initiative and to interact with us and your colleagues in your school communities—ELA teachers, guidance counsellors, school principals and other administrative staff, and, of course, the students themselves. We are keen to hear from you.

This initiative is long overdue and would be the first in Canada to pave the way for a growing demographic of ELLs, as well as native English speakers (NES) who are not experiencing success in the current literature-based ELA program or who do not find the program a fit for their future academic studies in postsecondary STEM-focused programs.

Background Information and What the Research Suggests

The demographic landscape of the K–12 classroom is rapidly changing to include increasing linguistic and cultural diversity. Approximately 25 per cent of students in large urban schools in Alberta speak a language other than English at home—whether they were born overseas and immigrated with their family or they were born in Canada.

For all of these students, developing cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) will be a gradual, protracted process assumed to occur in the context of the mainstream classroom, with little direct instructional support. Lack of access to the dominant cultural references in literature studies, which are often metaphorically framed, further bars these students from meaningful involvement in the ELA curriculum.

A growing body of scholarly research from across Canada (especially Alberta) undertaken over the past 30 years tells us that we need to rethink the high school ELA program. Indeed, we must focus on the development of CALP before high school if ELLs are to be well prepared for their transition to postsecondary school—a goal most hold as a way of participating in a complex, competitive, connected global knowledge economy and the broader Canadian social fabric of which they are a part.

Topics of research endeavour have included tracking studies of

- high school achievement outcomes among different age-on-arrival (AOA) cohorts;
- early English language/vocabulary and literacy development among young learners;
- diploma examination outcomes for ELLs;

- ELLs' insights about their school experiences in high school; and
- ELLs' participation rates, preferred programs of study and progress through university studies.

The findings unequivocally point to a significant achievement gap among ELLs in vocabulary learning over time connected to ELA 30-1 outcomes, which places these students at educational risk in postsecondary settings.

Counterintuitively, the youngest arrivals and the Canadian-born children of immigrants struggle the most with the unfolding academic literacy demands of content-area studies. These students have little recourse to first language proficiency as a way of transferring their underlying cognitive understandings or literacy into English.

Moreover, students' strengths in mathematics courses do not mitigate their linguistic vulnerability in engaging with the demands of disciplinary studies in engineering, computer science and business that are dense, difficult and overwhelmingly heavy for many students.

Tracking data revealed that ELLs took about six years to complete a four-year degree and graduated with a lower grade point average (GPA) than a comparison cohort of NES. This excludes them from graduate studies and, often, admission to professional programs of study (such as education). As a result, the teaching profession does not reflect the cultural diversity of our inclusive classrooms.

While ELLs represent about 25 per cent of the K–12 population, they represent about 45 per cent of admissions to university—a reflection of their strengths and goals in contributing to the shifting Canadian social fabric and the larger economy. Shortchanging these students over the course of their K–12 participation ultimately marginalizes them and represents an enormous loss in terms of intellectual capital that is not transformed into the educational capital Canada needs and strategically seeks in its immigration recruitment policies and practices.

The ESLC is at the forefront of advocating for ELLs and their educational needs over the duration of their schooling. Many of these students do not receive long-term funding, nor are they even recognized by way of coding (which unlocks

funding). These are related areas of advocacy that the ESLC is aware of.

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Using TikTok in the ESL Classroom

by Tracey Allan

TikTok is an app developed in China that hosts short videos (15 seconds to 10 minutes long) set to music. Approximately 1 billion people use TikTok daily.

TikTok is extremely popular in my ESL Level 1 and Level 2 classrooms. In an informal survey of my students last year, TikTok outpaced Facebook. (However, Instagram remains their top-ranking social media app.) My students watch TikTok videos for entertainment, dancing, recipes or instructional purposes. Some of them also use TikTok for language videos or language practice at home. TikTok can reach a wide range of language learners because of its user-friendly interface. Also, it is not among the social media apps that are blocked on our schoolwide Wi-Fi.

In a study of Chinese secondary students, Yang (2020, 162) found that “secondary-school students held positive attitudes towards introducing Tik Tok as video aids into EFL classroom teaching meanwhile using it as an English learning strategy out of class.” However, continued support from the classroom teacher is crucial for guiding students and facilitating their success.

Using TikTok to engage students and explore reading responses can benefit not only the students but also the teacher. Reframing reading activities in a classroom can breathe new life into outdated modes of instruction. Multimodal ensembles (such as TikTok) can be a bridge or a conduit for furthering students’ reading and participation in literacy activities outside of school. As Teague (2021) writes, “There is a growing need to assess if there have been . . . shifts in how students interact with their curriculum, their classmates, and their instructor.”

TikTok Reading Response Activity

To increase student engagement, TikTok can be paired with written text to stimulate ELLs’ reading

responses. As students create their own meanings from their reading experiences, the teacher can incorporate TikTok to guide their further exploration of the text.

I suggest using *Long Way Down*, by Jason Reynolds (2017), as a print partner in the TikTok reading response activity. You can give students excerpts from the text, which is written in narrative verse, and focus on specific aspects.

Reading Response 1: “Don’t Nobody”

Read the verse from *Long Way Down* titled “Don’t Nobody” (p 1). Have students answer the following reading response questions:

- Have you ever told someone a story, but they didn’t believe you?
- Why didn’t they believe you?

Watch the following TikTok videos:

- www.tiktok.com/@respect4talents/video/7092730836285459717
- www.tiktok.com/@arshsoni/video/7087966216001735942

Give students the following activities:

- Answer these questions: Do you believe the videos? Why or why not?
- Discuss in your group which video you think is real or true.
- Find another TikTok video about something unbelievable. (Try searching the hashtags #unbelievable or #magic.)

These activities are connected to the following learner outcomes from Alberta’s ESL program of studies (Alberta Education 1997, 3):

- Express opinions (general outcome 2)
- Interact to accomplish a task (general outcome 3)

Reading Response 2: “My Name Is”

This reading response focuses on students’ lived experience and their personal connections to the text. Many activities in the ESL classroom highlight

students' cultural identity, and through the texts chosen by the teacher, students can see themselves in the authors and characters in literacy activities in the classroom.

The sharing of names, how to pronounce them and what they mean is an integral part of building community. As the ESL program of studies states, "Students come to the English language learning classroom with a wealth of previous knowledge and experience to share and upon which to build" (Alberta Education 1997, 1).

Read the verse "My Name Is" from *Long Way Down* (p 2). Have students answer the following questions:

- How did you get your name?
- Does your name mean something in your language?
- Are you named after anyone in your family?
- Do your friends and family have a nickname or a shortened name for you?

Here are two TikTok videos to watch for inspiration:

- www.tiktok.com/@miacherishall/video/6905100552582040838
- www.tiktok.com/@rockthebells/video/7094853353980710187

Conclusion

TikTok is a popular app that naturally fits as a multimodal ensemble in the ESL classroom, and it can be used to incorporate activities that build student engagement and literacy skills. As Jewitt (2007, 276) writes,

A multimodal perspective offers a "new" way of conceptualizing texts and contexts. In the English classroom, for example, where common sense would have it that language is what really matters, teaching and learning is multimodal; and so are the texts that circulate in the classroom (Kress *et al.*, 2005). The classroom is itself a multimodal place with visual displays and an arrangement of furniture in space that realizes particular discourses of subject English (Jewitt, 2005).

Providing students with a space that holds and nurtures their own interests will ultimately foster

their language development and acquisition. As teachers, we can ensure that these spaces are curated in our classrooms so that students continue to read outside of the classroom and explore new ways of making meaning by combining their lived experience with their classroom experiences.

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If We Must Label Language Learners: *EL* Versus *MLL*

by Raichle Farrelly

What's in a label? In this article, I reflect on the labels that we use in our field to refer to those learning English as an additional language, and how those labels matter. A few of my intersecting identities—linguist, teacher educator, TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages) program director, language learner, activist—demand that I reflect on the role language plays in assigning social meaning and contributing to identity formation.

One of my favourite classes in my Introduction to Linguistics course entails an exploration of “everyday language you didn't know was racist.” Students often experience some dissonance when trying to think differently about language they have used for a lifetime (“I can't say *gyped* anymore?!”). I share with them that when we reach the other side of deep reflection and enact language practices that uplift—rather than oppress—it can be liberating. It's important to dive in and consider how our language impacts others. In fact, our words can create counternarratives, redistribute power and contribute to a deeper understanding of one another.

The terms we use to refer to others (and ourselves) will constantly evolve—until they don't. In a 1994 op-ed piece for the *New York Times*, Pinker wrote, “The euphemism treadmill shows that concepts, not words, are in charge: give a concept a new name, and the name becomes colored by the concept; the concept does not become freshened by the name.” However, he goes on to assert that when the labels used for certain groups remain, we have reached a place of mutual respect. Can you think of positive or neutral labels for groups that have stood the test of time?

Despite the challenges faced in coming to some semblance of agreement about terminology, words

and labels matter, and one way to show up for underrepresented or marginalized populations is to lean in, listen and (un)learn. Many of us, for example, have learned the meaning behind each part of the acronyms *BIPOC* and *LGBTQIA2S+*, as well as the fact that the latter expanded acronym is neither complete nor perfect in its capacity to reflect gender complexity. Learning and reflecting on labels and applying them mindfully and with respect are ways we can elevate each other—to honour all that each brings to the table, and to make sure there is a seat at the table for everyone in the first place.

The TESOL International Association has been called to move beyond being an association committed to contributing to the research, practice and service endeavours related to English (only) language teaching and learning. In recognition of the full linguistic repertoire of language learners and in celebration of linguistic diversity, TESOL is increasing its focus on multilingual education, benefits of translanguaging, and ways to leverage home languages in and out of the classroom. Additionally, TESOL is aware of the need to reconsider the labels assigned to those for whom English is an additional language. In the United States, Canada and other English-dominant countries, the labels used to denote students for whom English is not the native or home language contribute to decisions about policy, assessment, and placement in schools and programs. They also influence perceptions held about these learners by various individuals, including peers at school, teachers, community members and politicians. Students themselves have demonstrated concerns about and resistance to how they are labelled in their schools (Oropeza, Varghese and Kanno 2010; Shapiro 2014).

Critical reflections on the nature and application of deficit discourse about individuals using English as an additional language have led to an avoidance of labels such as *limited English proficient (LEP)*.

Seemingly more asset-oriented labels like *English-language learner (ELL)* have become more commonplace. However, in their article “Labels as Limitations,” Kleyn and Stern (2018) note that

while the new term English Language Learner (like its cousin, English Learner or EL) removes the word “limited,” it still focuses on what students are lacking: English. Students are positioned not as learners of math, science, or social studies, nor as artists, athletes, or poets.

To reflect the dynamic nature of language learning, as well as students’ linguistic capital, García and Kleifgen (2010) proposed the term *emergent bilingual*; however, the adjective *emergent* generally means “coming into being,” so for those who are advanced bilinguals, the label *emergent bilingual* seems to discount the extent to which they have developed proficiency in the language; yet *advanced bilingual* doesn’t take into account newcomers who are learning a new language for the first time. Some of our colleagues embrace the label *culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students*. In some states in the United States, the education endorsement for teachers working with this population is referred to as a CLD endorsement. The issue some have with that label is that it doesn’t distinguish those learning English as an additional language from students of various cultural backgrounds who speak varieties of English that are not legitimized in academic settings, such as African American Vernacular English (AAVE) or Black English (BE) in the United States.

Gunderson (2021) notes that the ELL/EL category is implicitly deficit based because it homogenizes an otherwise multidimensional group of individuals—typically determining inclusion in the category on the sole feature of English ability. As TESOL practitioners, we are among the first to recognize that learners of English as an additional language vary tremendously in terms of home language(s), cultural background, age, gender, socioeconomic status, educational experience and expectations, familial capital, academic goals,

personal interests, personality, and so much more! Accordingly, we should also recognize that any label, no matter how equitable we perceive it to be, will likely remain problematic in its inability to truly reflect the kaleidoscope of characteristics that make up each individual.

So where are we now—as a field, as a community, as an organization? TESOL has moved toward the use of *MLL—multilingual language learner*—in place of *ELL* or *EL* in an effort to recognize the assets, funds of knowledge and linguistic capital of all individuals using English as an additional language. Will this label be embraced on a global scale? Will it have an impact on the ways in which learners are perceived? Will it stand the test of time? Will it be viewed as equitable and respectful by those to whom it refers? I suppose the optimist in me would say—maybe? This reflection is simply an invitation to be mindful of how we refer to MLLs and to engage in conversations with students and colleagues about labelling. What does the hive mind in your context think, and how will that impact language, policy and action in your educational spaces?

In closing, I propose a few playful interpretations of well-known acronyms:

- ELLs = experts in language learning and
 - EALs = experts in acquiring languages,
- and a few new ideas:
- EMLs = experts in multiple languages and
 - MOLs = masters of languages.

Perhaps a short lesson on acronyms with MLLs in your context will bring us to the next best label!

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