



Accent

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President's Message

by Sarah Clark



The English as a Second Language Council (ESLC) hopes your school year has been fantastic. As president, I want to thank the leaders and teachers who work with our English-language learners. Our council is in awe of the work you do on a daily basis, and we see our students being supported to become active and contributing members of Albertan and Canadian society.

To connect with our members and to keep informed, our council holds an annual conference. This year the conference will be held October 29–31 at the Delta Lodge in Kananaskis. For more information or to register, please go to the ESLC website (www.eslcata.com).

We are always looking for people to get involved with our executive. If you are interested, please e-mail Diane Pham, our vice-president, at ataeslvicepresident@gmail.com. We currently have one vacant executive position—member at large for northern Alberta. All the other roles are filled, but we still are interested in building our council and have found that shared roles help with succession.

We offer a \$300 teacher bursary to our members who are taking postsecondary courses in ESL. Keep in mind that the deadline for application is **September 30, 2015**. More information is available at www.eslcata.com/uploads/1/8/3/0/18306429/bursary_information_2012.pdf.

As always, your comments, suggestions and ideas are welcome. Have a wonderful summer.

Keep up with the English as a Second Language Council on Facebook (www.facebook.com/ATAESLC) and on Twitter (@ESLCATA).

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Join the ESLC



Being an ESLC member has many perks, including the following:

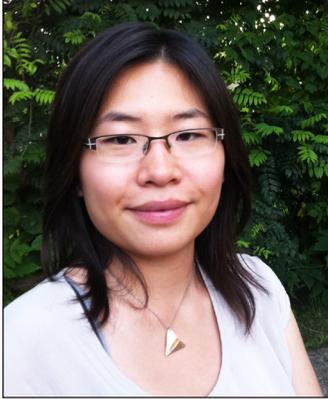
- Connection to Alberta Education
- Networking with like-minded professionals
- PD opportunities
- Some meetings held via Skype
- Information to help you with your professional practice
- Opportunity to advocate at a provincial level for our learners
- All expenses covered

Also, we are super-fun!

If you are interested in joining the ESLC, please contact our vice-president at ataeslcvicepresident@gmail.com.

Editor's Corner

by Annie Fung



Remember when our president, Sarah Clark, told us at our last conference that the ESLC is “super-fun”? She was not kidding! In fact, our newest executive members found this out when we sat down as a group to continue our strategic

planning work in Canmore. As fun as it was, we also worked hard to pool resources and ideas to bring us a few steps closer to our goals. We always welcome fresh ideas, so please contact us to get involved and help us reach our goals.

ESL teaching has taken me on many paths, including teaching subjects such as math and computers. As we wrap up the school year, I would like to share some of my learning with you.

My old friend Math and I parted ways after high school (likely over troubles with circle geometry), but it has been great to work with Math again these past two years in Calgary and Edmonton. In addition to building their mathematical thinking skills, our ESL students have worked hard to acquire academic vocabulary and to use learning tools to excel in the subject.

Elementary and middle school teachers may be familiar with the JUMP (Junior Undiscovered Math Prodigies) series. Each student receives an individual workbook for practising math. There is also a teacher's guide and Smart Board lessons to go with each chapter. While I was working at the Calgary Board of Education, we piloted this series for our high school LEAD (literacy, English and academic development) program. The students loved the instant feedback and how the math was broken into digestible steps. JUMP is fairly low-cost because it is produced by a nonprofit organization, so feel

free to take a look before September at <http://jumpmath.org>.

My friend Math and I also thought it would be interesting to sign our high school students up for the Mathletics program. This math website encourages students to do extra practice, and reports can be tracked for parents and teachers. At first, we were worried that students might find this a bit immature, but fear not! You can specify the grade-level units you would like your students to work on, all the way up to high school math. Some teachers use this tool as enrichment, and others grade some of the assessments. Students have a ball with Live Mathletics, where they can compete against a computer, their classmates and others around the world. Students can access Mathletics on their phones, tablets and home computers, which is a great bonus. Find out more at www.mathletics.ca.

Another old friend—Computers—and I go way back to the Floppy Disk Age. I was thankful when Computers first came into my life, because my parents never allowed me to hang out with Nintendo, whom they deemed uneducational. Nintendo and Mario were not allowed to play at my house at all. Period. I was very disappointed, but I soon found that I could play many educational games with Computers.

When I mentioned that I would be teaching an ESL information processing class, Computers suggested that I befriend Google Classroom and something called Read&Write for Google. I was a bit nervous at first—after all, I was born in PG (Pre-Google)—but the Google Classroom platform seems to be well integrated with our school district's software. Many districts have their own software for posting announcements online and attaching missed homework assignments, but Google Classroom is great because the interface is user-friendly and is integrated with our students' school Gmail accounts. It is comforting to know that my nagging has gone electronic and that students will receive my reminders about tests and buying me thank-you gifts directly in their inboxes.

Read&Write and I are not well acquainted yet, but for sure we'll be in contact over the summer. This is a Google app that students can download at school and at home, and it offers students extra support,

such as text-to-speech functions, vocabulary list builders, translators, word prediction and picture dictionaries.

Many tutorials and reviews are available for Google Classroom and Read&Write, but you may want to first visit the website (<https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/readwrite-for-google/inoeonmfapjbbkmdafoankkfajkcphgd>).

As the school year draws to a close, I'd again like to salute you for all you do for ESL students and their families. I hope that report cards were a breeze for you in June and that your summer is fun, safe and restful. And don't forget—now that *Accent* is downloadable in PDF, you can take your summer reading with you!

See you in the fall!

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www.facebook.com/ATAESLC

ESLC Retreat and Strategic Goal Planning

by Sarah Clark

The ESLC executive has been hard at work! We recently held our annual retreat, where we continued to work on our strategic planning goals. We hope to achieve what we have set out to do in the upcoming years.



ESLC STRATEGIC PLANNING GOALS

1. Creating Partnerships
2. Facilitate and Develop Professional Development
3. Council Member Engagement and Awareness
4. Advocacy for Funding



Success for English-Language Learners Through Differentiation

by Lynn Farrugia

On April 10, Edmonton Public Schools hosted more than 160 educators from across Alberta at Barnett House for a full-day workshop on differentiation with ESL students. The workshop was presented by Shelley Fairbairn and Stephaney Jones-Vo, coauthors of *Differentiating Instruction and Assessment for English Language Learners: A Guide for K–12 Teachers* (Caslon Publishing, 2010). Each participant received a copy of the book and a handy poster.

The presenters' passion for their work, their humour and their experience made for an excellent day. Although it can be challenging to address the needs and interests of so many educators at varying levels of experience, most participants felt that they learned something new from the workshop.

We engaged in a variety of hands-on and interactive activities that helped us learn how to level students and how to differentiate a lesson.

A tasty lunch was provided, and the weather was so lovely that many people even ate outside. There was plenty of time to mingle and network during lunch.

Pearson and Oxford University Press were present, so participants were able to view some excellent resources for teachers and ELL students.

The following participant comments perhaps say it best:

- “The session was hands-on and interactive, which was fabulous. The presenters were obviously very knowledgeable and had experience in the trenches, which I think added to their expertise. Teachers also walked away with take-home strategies to use now.”
- “The presentation allowed for teachers to interact and share information from all backgrounds. I highly appreciate the balance this presentation provided.”
- “We were introduced to a hands-on way to apply differentiation in the classroom. As well, the textbook and poster are resources that can be shared with colleagues.”
- “I appreciated these two ladies! They were engaging and fun to be around. They have a wonderful way of scaffolding adult learning!”
- “Loved the modelling—everything from having a content goal and a language goal throughout the session to using sentence frames. It was a well-developed presentation!”

Reports from Members at Large

Calgary Catholic

by Samantha Tomlinson



Here's What

- Currently, 28 per cent of students in the Calgary Catholic School District (CCSD) are identified as ELLs.
- Our new St John Reception Centre means that ELL support teams are

now located in one building.

- An ELL literacy/numeracy summer school program for students in Grades 9–12 will be offered this summer. This program is offered at no cost to students and their families.
- A district interpreter training session took place in May. The CCSD currently employs interpreters in over 50 languages.
- A focus on senior high has the ELL team collaborating with subject area consultants to create and facilitate professional learning sessions for teachers. Data generated from diploma exam results are being gathered and analyzed.
- The CCSD is looking at how best to support Canadian-born ELL students, teachers and families with their English-language development and identity affirmation of these often transnational students.
- The district is continuing to use the Learner Support Plan to document student strengths,

areas of growth, language proficiency levels, goal setting and student progress. The *Alberta K–12 ESL Proficiency Benchmarks* (Alberta Education, 2009) continue to be used to support programming for ELL students and to assess English-language development.

So What?

- As the ELL population continues to grow, so will our response to the diverse needs of immigrant families and youth (through reunification workshops, an interpreter bank, community agency partnerships, district supports and so on).
- The summer school program supports many students in their transition to senior high in Canada, as well as offering experiences for participants through weekly field trips.
- Access to interpreters provides a bridge for communication between school personnel and families. Ongoing training and PD continue to be offered to maintain a database of trained interpreters for teachers in our district to access.
- Collaboration with subject area consultants allows for continued focus on embedded ELL strategies in content areas. Analyzing diploma exam results serves as the beginning of collecting historical evidence.

Now What?

- Emphasis will continue to be on integrating the ESL proficiency benchmarks for purposeful planning and instruction, as well as embedding culturally responsive practices in PD.
- Teachers continue to need support in developing lessons that include both content and language objectives.
- Collaboration between ELL and other Instructional Services teams will continue to be emphasized.
- Work with long-term ELL students will deal with transnational student identities, supporting English-language development and levelling correctly.

Edmonton Public

by Lynn Farrugia



District News

I cannot believe how much has changed and how much is happening in the Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB) with ESL. As of September 30, 2014, we had 20,680 ESL-coded students—23.1 per cent of the district's

student population!

All ESL consultants (eight full-time and one part-time) are now part of the district's Inclusive Learning unit. Each Inclusive Learning team has an ESL consultant dedicated to the needs of 25 schools. We also have a Diversity Education unit, with a new supervisor, Marlene Hanson. This team has a part-time ESL consultant who handles the ESL coding, funding and benchmarking for the district. It also includes intercultural consultants who support the needs of our schools and families. The sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) consultants are also part of the Diversity Education team.

This is the third year of our ESL Reception Centres, where students and their families who are foreign-born, with limited English-language proficiency, can be referred for an appointment. During the appointment, family and educational background information is gathered and an initial English-language proficiency assessment is completed. Information about the school board and school policies and expectations are shared with the families.

We finally settled on a new way to identify students who have exhausted their five years of ESL funding but continue to require and receive ESL supports. As per Alberta Education's suggestion, we will leave the 301 or 303 code and then have schools add the new 1004 code in order to identify those students and so that we can collect data. We hope to share this data with the province in order to advocate for the reinstatement of seven years of ESL funding.

The EPSB is moving forward with creating a new electronic reporting system to address the four separate reports and documents that teachers are required to complete: the individual behaviour support plan (IBSP), the *Alberta K–12 ESL Proficiency Benchmarks*, the individual program plan (IPP) and the student-focused medication management plan (MMP).

A major new district initiative for K–12 is Career Pathways, which aims to build awareness, understanding and readiness for career pathways that will give all students dignity and fulfillment in life. The Career Pathways model will incorporate community living, the world of work, apprenticeship training and postsecondary studies. An ESL subcouncil with representation from our ESL team will be part of this initiative.

On April 10, our district hosted a successful PD day on differentiated instruction for ELLs. For more information, see my write-up in this issue of *Accent*.

EPSB moved to a new calendar this school year, with three common district PD days for the first time ever. Various ESL sessions were presented by our consultants.

The ESL consultants have agreed to review books to add to a new Multicultural Literature section in the EPSB's book review database (<https://reviews.epsb.ca/reviews/>). This has long been a dream of mine, and I'm excited to see it finally coming to fruition.

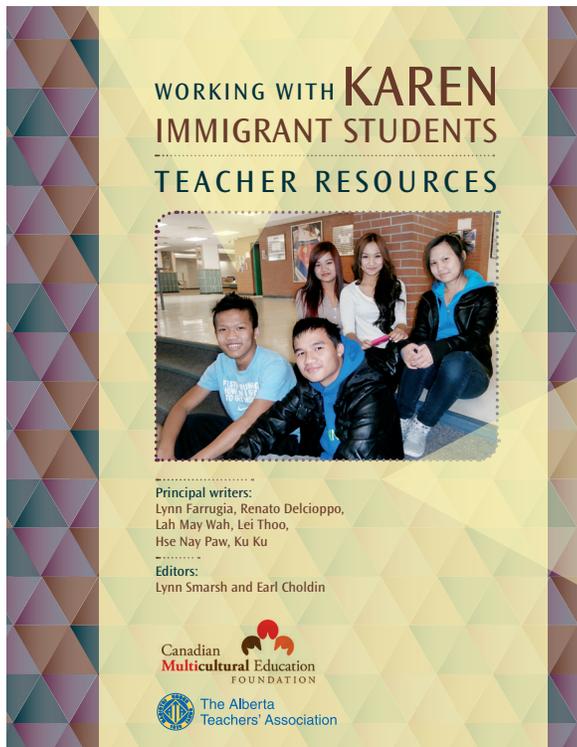
I was thrilled to be one of the principal authors of *Working with Karen Immigrant Students*, published by the ATA and the Canadian Multicultural Education Foundation. This teacher- and parent-friendly resource is one in a series of booklets available from the ATA. The other two focus on Somali students and South Sudanese students. A fourth, on Arab students, is in the works.

In March, one of our ESL consultants attended TESOL's K–12 Dream Day in Toronto.

Another ESL consultant attended the EL Achieve Symposium in California, also in March.

I continue to present introductory sessions on the *Alberta K–12 ESL Proficiency Benchmarks* under contract with the Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium and the Consortium provincial francophone.

No wonder we are so exhausted!



ESLC News

Lisa Etty and I hosted the ESLC table at the Edmonton Beginning Teachers' Conference last September. We gave out candy and a popular foldable smartphone stand emblazoned with the ESLC logo. I also presented "ESL 101—The Basics" to about 25 new and eager teachers.

I delivered two sessions at the Early Childhood Education Council's annual conference, held in Edmonton last November. The sessions were "Oral Language Development for ELLs" and "ESL 101—The Basics."

On November 18, at the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) fall general meeting, Annie Fung and I gave a brief presentation, to a small group of trustees, titled "ESL in Alberta: The Reality." This was a great opportunity to share information that the trustees can use to advocate for ELL students. The ASBA even passed a motion to advocate for a full nine years of ESL funding for students.

I promoted the ESLC at all the professional learning sessions I delivered across the province, as well as handing out membership flyers. ESL consultants provided the six brochures in the ESLC's Understanding ESL Learners series to numerous school administrators and teachers. I always include

the link to the brochures (www.teachers.ab.ca/Publications/OTHER%20PUBLICATIONS/Pages/Other%20Publications.aspx#english-as-a-second-language-council) and our website (www.eslcata.com) in all my ESL PowerPoint presentations.

Another busy year spreading the message that ELL students are in our classrooms and that they need support!

Edmonton Catholic

by JoAnne Snihurowych and Roslyn Marcelo



Roslyn Marcelo and JoAnne Snihurowych

The Edmonton Catholic School District continues to welcome the world at One World . . . One Centre. In August 2012, the district opened the centre to provide wraparound services, including welcoming students and families, processing registrations, completing English-language assessments on the school-aged children, and providing support to students and families as they learn about their new country and enter our school district. Since its opening, the centre has welcomed over 3,100 students to Edmonton Catholic Schools. In 2014/15, the district had almost 8,000 ELL students, which is 20 per cent of the total student enrolment.

With its coordinated approach, the centre provides supports for students, school staff and families. It is home to our ESL consultants, who work hand in hand with school staffs to ensure optimal programming for ELLs. International Student Services promotes our district internationally and assists students who would like to study in one

of our schools. Our Intercultural Services team assists families by informing them about our education system, linking them with a wide range of community supports and services, and providing learning and recreational opportunities. The Mosaic program offered by the Early Learning Department offers a variety of programs for our newcomer families with preschool children. The federally funded Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program has a presence in the building to teach adults those critical language skills they need in order to be full participants in Canadian society. Our strong relationships with all levels of government and community partners—such as Catholic Social Services, the Edmonton Immigrant Services Association, the Rotary Club, the Boys and Girls Clubs Big Brothers Big Sisters, Uncles and Aunts at Large, Reach Edmonton, Edmonton Public Libraries and the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers—enable us to offer this wraparound approach to services and a seamless referral and linking process. Edmonton Catholic Schools is blessed to have such wonderful support.

The district continues to make progress with the ever-increasing ELL population in Grades 10–12. All high schools will continue offering locally developed and acquired courses in both semesters. High schools have been allotted funds to continue providing transition advisors, a role that has been instrumental in supporting our ELL students with their graduation pathways and course selections.

High schools will also see a change in standardized assessment tools. The IDEA Proficiency Test (IPT) has been selected as the new tool for assessing all ELLs in Grades 10–12 upon arrival into Canada and on a yearly basis. This assessment was

used with ELLs in two pilot high schools and at One World . . . One Centre this spring, and full rollout will commence in September. It is built on sound and current theories on development, learning and language acquisition and is ESL-normed. Schools will be able to administer the reading and writing components to groups of ELLs, with the option of individual assessments as well.

In elementary schools, the consultants have continued to work closely with ESL designates and classroom teachers on effective programming, strategies and assessments for ELLs. Digital benchmarks were rolled out for the district last September and will be mandatory for all grades this fall.

We have also met with our multidisciplinary teams and Genesis early learning department. The early learning team shared with us the exciting role of the multicultural animators, who work closely with students and their families in pre-K and Grade 1 classrooms.

Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) sessions have been under way for two cohorts of teachers—elementary and secondary. After two full-day PD sessions with SIOP trainers, the cohort met three more times throughout the year for further PD and sharing opportunities. The teachers felt that the strategies provided during the callback sessions and the groundwork set out by the SIOP presenters were useful and practical.

Edmonton Catholic Schools looks forward to continuing to serve its ever-growing ELL population through One World . . . One Centre, SIOP professional development, the new transition advisor role in high schools and more course options for secondary students.

Book Review: *Written in the Stars*, by Aisha Saeed

by Lynn Farrugia

One of my passions during the last 10 years has been children's literature, especially multicultural children's literature. More recently, I have been searching for books that reflect the experiences and stories of our students. Aisha Saeed's recently published *Written in the Stars* (Nancy Paulsen Books, 2015) may be one of those books, although I truly hope that none of our students have to endure this experience. I could not put this book down and read it late into the night until I finished it.

Naila is an American-born high school senior with very conservative Pakistani immigrant parents. They have allowed her to choose what and where to study, what to wear and even her friends. They will not, however, allow her to have a boyfriend of her choosing; she must have an arranged marriage. Naila falls in love with Saif, a Pakistani boy whose family has been shunned by their community. Their forbidden love is soon discovered, and her parents are devastated. They swiftly take her back to Pakistan under the guise of a family holiday. However, it soon

becomes apparent that she has been brought there for a forced marriage. Naila's nightmare is just beginning. Despite her every effort to escape, the marriage happens, and even more traumatic events follow. Her only hope of escape is Saif, the love of her life—if he can find her before it is too late.

Saeed includes resources for those who, like Saif's family, want to help real-life Nailas. In her author's note, she explains that while her own "semi-arranged" marriage was a success, she wrote the book to draw attention to the "silent epidemic" of forced marriage. Through Naila's ordeal, readers will have their eyes opened to how someone can be forced to marry against her will. What is particularly interesting is that the author leaves out any mention of the characters' religious beliefs, as forced marriages can happen in any culture, country or religion.

Saeed's prose is simple and straightforward. By showing rather than telling, she allows readers to imagine how Naila must feel. The book contains some violence and sex, both appropriate to the context and the age of the protagonist.

Although the book is set in the United States, the practice of forced marriage also affects Canadian immigrants and citizens. The January 2015 issue of *Maclean's* magazine featured the article "Against Their Will: Inside Canada's Forced Marriages," by Rachel Browne (www.macleans.ca/news/canada/against-their-will/). An excellent source for further information is the Forced Marriage Project website (www.fmp-acsa.ca/home/).

ESLC Executive and Table Officers 2014/15

President

Sarah Clark
Bus 403-652-3001
sclark@redeemer.ab.ca

Past President

Christine Cao
Bus 780-429-8000
ataeslcpastpresident@gmail.com

Vice-President

Diane Pham
Bus 403-777-7670
dtpham@cbe.ab.ca

Secretary

Gaylene Mackay
Bus 403-347-1171
gaylene.mackay@rdpsd.ab.ca

Treasurer

Elisé Saraceni
Bus 403-500-2100
elise.saraceni@cssd.ab.ca

Conference Codirectors 2016

Jana Fedun
Bus 403-500-2100
mrs.fedun@hotmail.com

Joelle Marshall
Bus 403-500-2100
joelle.marshall@cssd.ab.ca

Conference Director 2015

Rabih El-Masri
Bus 403-543-5070
rmasr@shaw.ca

Publications Director

Annie Fung
Bus 780-479-1991
anniepyfung@gmail.com

Webmaster

Dianne Leong-Fortier
Bus 403-243-8880, ext 2137
djlfortier@cbe.ab.ca

PD Director North

Nancy Musica
Bus 780-429-8000
nancy.musica@shaw.ca

PD Director South

Alice Bui
Bus 403-777-8250

Alberta Education Representative

Mike Ettrich
Bus 780-644-8195
mike.ettrich@gov.ab.ca

PEC Liaison

Diane M Sellars-Myshchysyn
Bus 403-932-2215
diane.sellars@teachers.ab.ca

ATA Staff Advisor

Monique Gravel
Bus 780-447-9449
or 1-800-232-7208
monique.gravel@ata.ab.ca

Members at Large

Calgary Catholic

Diane Casello
diane.casello@cssd.ab.ca

Calgary Public

Kathy Andrews
Bus 403-777-7470
kjandrews@cbe.ab.ca

Edmonton Catholic

JoAnne Snihurowych
joanne.snihurowych@ecsd.net

Roslyn Marcelo
Bus 780-434-0294
roslyn.marcelo@ecsd.net

Edmonton Public

Lynn Farrugia
Bus 780-429-8000
lynn.farrugia@epsb.ca

Northern Alberta

TBA

Red Deer

Cathy Cameron
Bus 403-343-1055
ccameron@rdcrs.ab.ca

Southern Alberta

Angelica McDonald
Bus 403-938-4426
mcdonalda@fsd38.ab.ca

Open

Teresa Borchers
Bus 403-343-1055
teresa.borchers@rdcrs.ca

Connie Coe

Bus 403-343-3238
ccoe@rdcrd.ab.ca

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