



TEAL MANITOBA JOURNAL
VOLUME 27 NUMBER 3—MARCH 2012



TEAL MANITOBA ARTICLE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

TEAL Manitoba Article Submission Guidelines

TEAL Manitoba Journal welcomes submissions from teachers, students, academics, and anyone interested in the field of teaching English as an additional language. There are three regular sections in the journal:

Features: These articles can be theoretical or practical. The range of articles in this section includes: classroom-based activities, methods, strategies, workshop presentations, theoretical and/or academic perspectives, and issues in the TEAL/TESL profession. Articles may include example worksheets, and all articles must include a reference list of materials consulted and quoted when writing the article.

Reviews: Reviews of teaching materials and resources are written by practicing teachers and instructors. In addition, we publish reviews of fiction and nonfiction books, websites, articles, movies or anything related to EAL, newcomers and international cultures and issues. A bibliographic reference of the resource being reviewed must be included with the review.

Voice Box: Lesson plans, exercises, and resources can be submitted. The purpose of this section is to provide teachers with a forum to share resources that have been useful in the classroom.

TEAL News: This section includes updates and news from and about the various associations and schools that are related to teaching EAL in Manitoba.

TEAL Manitoba encourages you to make submissions to any of these sections of the journal. Please submit articles or article ideas to the editor as a Microsoft Word e-mail attachment. Please ensure your submissions arrive by the deadlines listed.

The editors make final publication decisions, but they regularly seek advice from the TEAL Manitoba Executive at its monthly meetings. If you wish to collaborate in the editing of your submission, please let the editor know. We appreciate your input and assistance.

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Teachers of English as an Additional Language

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EDITORS' VOICE

Kevin Carter

The World is fast becoming homogenized through the forces of Globalization where resources and ideas can be transmitted around the World within seconds (through the Internet) to less than a day (via airplanes). As localized economies become ever greater global economies there becomes greater pressure to have access to a global language. This is our challenge as EAL teachers, to prepare our students to use English within the global community to satisfy their own needs, whether it is economic, political, or environmental in nature. This issue of the TEAL Manitoba Journal is therefore dedicated to exploring our role in shaping the course of Globalization.

Cultures, more than ever before, are in close contact with one another due to modern technologies and the forces of Globalization. English therefore represents a means of access to the global community and as a result people from around the globe are relentlessly pursuing the acquisition of it. Acquiring an additional language is no easy task, especially for adult learners, and therefore one naturally questions whether cultural identity plays a determinant factor in successful acquisition. Elena Dupuis explores this topic in her paper entitled, "Cultural Identity of an ESL Adult Learner and its Impact on Learning". She concludes that while one's cultural identity can affect language acquisition to a degree, it is not the ultimate factor determining success. More important is the educator's ability to match his/her teaching

style to that of particular students' learning styles. This insight is an important one because it highlights the fact that one culture is not more beneficial than another when it comes to learning an additional language. It also challenges educators to take more responsibility for the success or failure of their students. If one agrees with the general premise of Elena's paper, a culture cannot be blamed for students' failure to acquire an additional language. There was a time when certain cultures were denigrated and members of these cultures were considered somewhat less capable. We have certainly come a long way in our collective understanding through negotiation and experiences which only becomes possible through the phenomenon of Globalization. We now abandon a deficit perspective and recognize that people from all cultures are equal in their capability for successful acquisition even if the route to get there must be differentiated to the preferences of individual learners.

Educational institutions are sometimes resistant to change due to the need for teachers to adapt their teaching styles. We are creatures of habit and it is sometimes hard to break into a new way of thinking about the teaching process. However; the world changes more quickly today than ever before. We must, as a profession, be willing to adapt our practice to keep pace with the modern world or risk becoming irrelevant and obsolete. Many institutions ban social media, such as youtube and i-phones, in the

classroom because they believe that they distract students from learning. With the popularity of various forms of social media increasing among even the youngest of our pupils, we should be asking how we can utilize these tools instead of how to prevent students from accessing them during class. Social media to a large extent is the driving force behind the modern version of globalization and therefore our students must be masters of this digital media in order to become relevant members of the global community. In other words, social media has the benefit of allowing students to become producers instead of just consumers of content and therefore utilization of this media may help students become contributors to this global community. Elena Dupuis therefore explores how social media can help learners acquire an additional language in her second paper entitled, "Interactive Ways of Social Media for EAL Students and its Impact on Learning". She describes how social media and computer based applications can be used by both the teacher and the learners themselves to help students acquire English. No longer does the teacher and students have to be together in the same room at the same time. Social media allows for distance learning which advances the potential and magnitude of this modern age of globalization. The applications of social media will only grow in importance in the future and therefore reflection on Elena's paper is both timely and beneficial.

The course of globalization, especially through technology, has been one aimed at equalizing the opportunities for all peoples of the world. This romantic notion, however, does not hide the fact that some of our students may need extra help to join this global community. These students may have interrupted schooling or none at all due to war, civil unrest, poverty, or any number of other factors. They may also suffer from trauma related to their prior experiences and therefore educators may need to do more than simply teach them English. After all, we are not really teachers of English as an Additional Language, we are teachers of students and therefore we must be empathetic to our students' needs. Sandra Melo outlines four key elements to help these learners in her paper entitled, "Understanding the Needs of LAL Students – Key Elements for Planning". If we follow these key elements in our lesson planning, LAL students may leave the periphery of the global community and become full members where they can share their insights on such important issues as poverty, war, and education. Their voices represent millions of those which currently remain silent. If we can help them share their personal wisdom, their contribution to the global discussion on a range of

topics may truly be transformative. The benefits of globalization, especially where it has helped lift millions of people out of poverty, cannot be overstated. English, as a global language, is a necessary component to help make this whole system work. However; there is a hierarchy present in this modern age of globalization with the Western powers at the apex and indigenous peoples at the lowest rung. Since we are responsible for teaching all people who enter our classroom doors, we should reflect upon a couple of crucial questions: What led to the current fate of societies? What benefits are there for maintaining cultural diversity in a homogenizing world? To help reflect on these questions I suggest reading two books, "Guns, Germs, and Steel" by Jared Diamond and "The Wayfinders" by Wade Davis. Both books are enlightening to read and challenge us as EAL teachers to address our assumptions about civilizations and the need to maintain a rich diversity of cultures, including first languages. Please see my review article entitled, "Straddling the Present and the Past to Face the Challenges of the Future", to learn more about these two books and how they are relevant to the EAL Field.

I would like to thank all of our contributors to this issue of the TEAL Manitoba Journal. By contributing their ideas, they have added their voice to the global discussion on issues affecting language education. It is my sincere hope that more educators decide to contribute their own voices to this discussion. We accept feature articles, reviews, and lesson plans. More information, as well as past issues of the journal, can be found at www.tealmanitoba.ca. I look forward to adding your voices to the discussion, which ultimately benefits our students.

The EAL Learners' Fund and EAL Professional Development Fund

Throughout our history, TEAL Manitoba [formerly TESL Manitoba] has provided financial support and professional development opportunities to the Manitoba EAL community.

In an endeavour to increase this involvement, we are happy to announce that two separate funds have been set up: *The EAL Learners' Fund* and *EAL Professional Development Fund*. Students can apply to the EAL Learner's Fund for a bursary of up to \$500 and EAL professionals working within the Manitoba EAL community can apply for up to \$1000 funding.

For more information and application forms, please visit our website at www.tealmanitoba.ca.



PRESIDENT'S VOICE

Kim Hewlett

On behalf of TEAL Manitoba Executive, I would like to thank our members for their continued support. I would also like to thank Kevin Carter and Eunhee Buettner for their outstanding job of the journal to draw from the voices of our members. We greatly appreciate your reviews and article submissions to our journal.

Our organization is also exploring new ways to reach our membership through professional development opportunities for kindergarten to adult education EAL students, staff, and administrators. I look forward to your feedback about what type of professional development would benefit your work situation. Please feel free to send me your comments or suggestions at khewlett@mymts.net.

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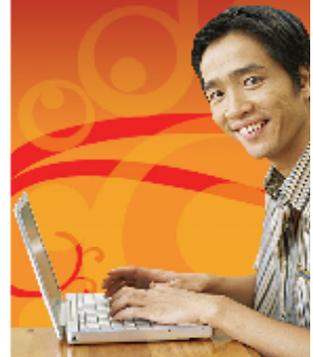
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CULTURAL IDENTITY OF AN ESL ADULT LEARNER AND ITS IMPACT ON LEARNING

BIOGRAPHY:

Elena Dupuis has a B.Ed. from the Russian State University and a Financial Services Diploma from Assiniboine Community College in Brandon, Manitoba. She teaches English as an Additional Language for Westman Immigrant Services, and is currently completing a M.Ed. from Brandon University. Elena enjoys teaching EAL for adults and is passionate about her students.

ABSTRACT:

Cultural identity reflects our capabilities to learn and acquire a second language and it oftentimes has a huge impact on our achievements. Despite the fact that the definition of culture is very broad, one should say that culture is what we are and things that surround us in our daily life, including the language. In fact, once we understand and realize our own culture, it is easier to accept the culture of another along with its target language. The following paper presents a discussion of what truly impacts learning English as a second language: culture as a part of our identity alone or some other important characteristics. In the end, this paper reveals that cultural identity is not the only factor that impacts learning English as a second language. In fact, the combination of all aspects (described below) leads to second language acquisition.

Our cultural identity or who we are oftentimes determines our abilities to learn, especially when it relates to acquiring a new language. Working closely with ESL adult students for the past three years made me think about differences in cultural behaviours, norms, and the ability to acquire a second language in a new country. Oftentimes I would ask myself questions: What helps ESL adult learners acquire another language? What impact does culture have on learning or does it have any impact at all? I would like to find answers for these questions. The definition of culture is broad, however, one can say for sure that culture is what surrounds us; it is a part of a thinking process, our sense of belonging

to a certain identity, and most importantly, it is the ability to speak the language of this particular culture. Oftentimes culture determines our identity. According to Pierce (as cited in Ullman, 1997), "...identity can be seen as the various ways in which people understand themselves in relation to others, and how they view their past and their future" (para. 1). In fact, the most successful language learners may be associated with taking the opportunity to become a part of another culture (ease of integration). Once they come to a realization and an understanding of their own culture, they may be more willing to accept the target language of another culture.

Cultural identity represents many aspects of learning: whether it is education, the way we think in a particular language, or our lifestyle. ESL adults, for example, will more likely engage, learn and use a new language when there is a clear need for it (Gilmartin, 2008). Learning is a part of our culture and therefore the cultural identity of an ESL adult learner may be the most significant factor in determining his/her ability to acquire English as a second language. Those students' whose culture is governed by a solid educational background may learn faster than those whose culture places less importance on education. For example, the Chinese educational culture is based on a significant amount of studying, drilling, and memorizing. The majority of Chinese students graduate from high school, whereas the Ethiopian students oftentimes do not continue past the elementary level. Therefore, learners who were raised under different cultural traditions and norms back in their native countries will have different levels of education, concentration, motivation and studying approaches.

Many times in the classroom I am able to see students whose behaviors' and learning abilities are directly based on the culture they are from. For example, Chinese students are strong writers and they like memorizing and practicing new information. Ethiopian students find it challenging to write in English and some struggle to learn and remember new materials. Peirce

(as cited in Ullman, 1997) argues that a learner's ability to speak is also affected by relations of power between speakers. Considering this, in order to better represent human complexity and account for the "ambivalence" that learners sometimes feel in the process of language learning, Pierce (1995) suggests that the concept of "investment in the target language" (Pierce as cited in Ullman, 1997, p. 6) may be a useful complement to theories of language learning. This investment describes the complex dynamic relationship between the learner and the social world. That would mean that students, for instance, female population from the Middle East or African countries may be less willing to communicate and accept the second language due to the cultural norms and their lifestyle (women do not have many rights). A fear of judgment to speak in front of everybody due to the cultural differences is something that cannot be neglected. Therefore, any effort from the teachers' perspectives might not be successful if the female students' behavior is ruled by the cultural norms of their background. In fact, if there is no freedom of speech in their own language, why would the learners be motivated to study a foreign one?

Freedom plays a vast role in the North-American culture where the focus is placed on an individual. Therefore, students who come from countries like Japan, South Korea, and China are traditionally accustomed to group learning styles, where the teacher plays a dominant role. Moreover, according to Huang (2009), differences in teaching styles have become the biggest cultural difference for Chinese students. Chinese teachers are very serious and focused on lecturing. In contrast, there is generally an equal relationship between teachers and students in North-American classrooms. North-American teachers often use humor and various informal teaching methods in the classroom (Huang, 2009). As a result, transitioning into a different culture with a different language will present a common problem for acquiring a second language. Sparks and Ganschow (1993) also claim that "learners may have deficits in either

the phonological, semantic or syntactic systems in their native language, and this can affect how well they can master a foreign language” (Sparks & Ganschow as cited in Renou, n.d., p. 1). Immigrants who come from various countries, and refugees with low literacy in their own language, will experience extreme disadvantages in a culture that is governed by print (Folinsbee, 2007).

What will explain the notion of the fact that some students learn a second language faster and more efficiently than others, taking into account that they all come from the same cultural group? This question can raise a debate. According to Spolsky (1989), if the principle of biological differences can be applied to all people, then the idea of a new language learning might first come from the universality of the “language faculty” in “non-pathological human beings” (p. 101). To be more specific, the ability to acquire another language is related to the innate and environmental conditions: individual abilities on the one hand and cultural identity on the other. One of those individual abilities which are related to successful learning is memory. Spolsky (1989) would also agree with Juff, suggesting that memory is important for informal learning. Here, I believe, memory is related to age, therefore, the younger the learner is, the more abilities and memory skills he/she has. This difference is noticeable when teaching the variety of age groups where one would have significant difficulties in remembering certain materials compared to the other learner.

Older students are found to be accustomed to traditionally approach tasks in their high school language textbooks whereas the requirement of learners is based on thorough reflections (Tuan, 2011). Contrarily, younger learners have been exposed to both traditional and modern teaching methods. The most important factor that makes younger learners active is that they have grown up in the world of multimedia full of interactive activities, which does not allow them a lot of time to reflect on the material (Tuan, 2011). Even then, comparing the same age groups, some learners will have a better ability to grasp the second language. The question is why. What else

would be an additional factor in acquiring another language? In spite of the fact that some achievements in learning another language can be accounted for by the environmental conditions and innate abilities, the idea of individual learning styles will directly relate to two potential explanations for differences that could be inherited or biologically based: intelligence or general cognitive ability/language aptitude (Spools, 1989). Therefore, the argument between language proficiency level and high IQ scores still presents a concern.

According to Oller (1981), language proficiency and general intelligence are more

“The most important factor that makes younger learners active is that they have grown up in the world of multimedia full of interactive activities, which does not allow them a lot of time to reflect on the material (Tuan, 2011)”

or less the same things. Here, Gardner (1993) argues that general intelligence has to be viewed larger in correlation to the notion of Multiple Intelligences. He also suggests the need for a broader view of the human mind and of human learning than what currently exists. Multiple Intelligences holds that every student is smart not just in one or two ways but in many. Gardner believes instructors must attempt to reach all students and develop their diverse intelligences. In order for teachers to understand how to implement various teaching methods which include Multiple Intelligences, they should accurately identify a students’ intelligence ranking. In addition, for individuals to understand and articulate their own learning preferences specified by their intelligences, they should also identify their own individual strengths (Gardner, 1993). Therefore, instructors need to teach in a variety of ways to provide various learning experiences for students (Gardner as cited in McClellan & Conti, 2008).

Gardner based the Multiple Intelligences theory on three foundational principles: (a) individuals are not the same; individual differences do exist; (b) people do not all have the same kinds of minds; and (c) education becomes most effective if these individual differences are considered (Gardner as cited in McClellan & Conti, 2008).

One of the most remarkable features of the theory of multiple intelligences is how it

provides eight different potential pathways to teach (Armstrong, 2009). If a teacher has difficulty reaching some learners in the more traditional linguistic or logical ways of instruction, the theory of multiple intelligences suggests several other ways in which the material might be presented to help effective learning, including self-reflection exercises, music, words, pictures, numbers, physical experience (kinesthetic and tactile), social experience, and experience with the real world (Armstrong, 2009). At the same time, Armstrong suggests that educators do not always need to teach students in all eight different ways

because the most important thing is to find the best and the most effective teaching or learning tools. What determines the intelligence level and how will it affect second language acquisition? To be

considered intelligent, some authors suggest that a person has to do well on an intelligence test. However, the tests can give you a score, but what they do not give is an understanding of the mental processes that underlie the score (Sternberg as cited in McClellan & Conti, 2008). Besides, different intelligences appear in different skills and abilities. All human beings apply these intelligences to solve problems. However, it is interesting to note that many believe that in order to acquire another language, you do not need to be very intelligent as language acquisition, according to Reid (1987), depends on some other variables.

Those variables are age, language, social class, educational background, time spent in a foreign country, and gender. He also claims as stated above that the age factor determines learners’ ability to comprehend another language. “The older the student, the higher the preference means for visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile learning” (Reid, 1987, p. 95). Reid also identifies six learning styles: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, group and individual. Each personal style reflects how a student learns something new whether that information is in a second language or his/her first language. The same principles apply towards learning English as a second language because each individual learner will absorb the language according to his/her own style, if that style is included in the instructor’s teaching methods. Fur-

thermore, Reid (1987, 1995) proposes two major hypotheses about learning styles. First, he argues that all students have their own learning styles, learning strengths and weaknesses. Secondly, he argues that there is a mismatch between teaching and learning styles that leads to learning failure, frustration, and demotivation (Reid as cited in Peacock, 2001). Moreover, it has been emphasized that learning styles might be a “predictor of foreign language acquisition” (Ehrman, Ely, Matthews as cited in Shen, 2010, p. 540), and that there is a relationship between learning styles and academic achievement. Let us follow this idea.

If all learners could acquire information in the same way, the means of acquiring another language would be much easier. The instructors would not have as much difficulties in presenting materials to the students because they would only need to be presented in one way. However, taking into account the differences in learning styles, one can say for sure that the teaching styles must match the students’ learning styles. Despite the idea that teaching and learning styles play a huge role, very little attention has been paid to how learners learn and how teachers teach (Mulalic, Shah & Ahmad, 2009). Learning new things become more complicated if information is presented inefficiently, especially if the learner has very little experience with the content. Individuals create knowledge from their experiences, not only from received instruction. Different learning styles reflect learning preferences that can change within various situations. Learning therefore is affected by learning styles therefore in the case of students who are able to employ multiply learning styles, their learning outcomes are higher (Felder, Reid, Claxton & Murell, Elison as cited in Mulalic et al., 2009). Since learning styles play a dominant role in the learning process, educators should not neglect addressing it.

The research done by Reid indicates that approximately 90% of traditional classroom instruction is tailored to the auditory learner. Teachers talk to their students, ask questions, and discuss facts. However; “only 20% to 30% of any large group [can] remember 75% of what [is] presented through discussion” (Reid, 1987, p. 99). In

order to solve this problem, some learning style theorists suggest matching teachers’ and students’ styles. In this way, students are exposed to teaching styles that are consistent with their learning preferences. In fact, the study also shows interesting results concerning specific groups of students. It appears that Chinese students possess a very strong preference for kinesthetic learning whereas Spanish speakers choose both tactile and kinaesthetic learning methods (Mulalic et al., 2009). From my personal practice and years of experience, I support the results found in Reid’s study. Each cultural group and each individual does learn differently. In consideration of this, should teachers be more oriented towards learning individual preference styles and be more careful in adjusting their methods of teaching to satisfy every student’s needs? Cronbach & Snow (1977), agrees that the development of effective teaching behaviors is essential to student achievement, while Brophy (1986), on the other hand, believes that instructional adaptation based on student preferences “does not improve learning and may be detrimental” (Brophy, Cronbach & Snow as cited in Reid, 1987, p. 100).

Brophy’s point of view might raise some concerns as many educators believe that teaching and learning styles determine the academic success of students through teachers’ abilities to present the material in the best possible way. Besides, language learning styles and strategies appear to be among the most important variables influencing performance in a second language (Oxford, 1989). If learning styles influence the rate of success of students in acquiring a second language, how can one find a perfect match between learning and teaching? Can the learning styles be adapted to the teaching style of a particular educator? Theoretically, many variables exist in the educational literature but little research addresses the matching of teaching and learning styles. Peacock (2001) investigated the matching of teaching and learning styles in the real setting. He concludes that serious mismatches exist between learning styles of the students and the teaching styles of the lecturers (Peacock as cited in Mulalic et al., 2009). To match teaching and learning in the classroom means that instructors should try to accommodate different learn-

ing styles of the students. Adaptability to different learning styles plays a key role in student’s academic achievement (Mulalic et al., 2009). At the same time, Oxford (1991) argues that a learner should not be placed into one or another style category and taught exclusively according to his or her preferred style (Oxford as cited in Tuan, 2011).

Reid (1987) states that mismatches between learning and teaching styles often occur, resulting in bad effects on students’ learning and attitudes towards English. Moreover, Willing (1988) notes that matching learning and teaching styles improves learning, attitudes and motivation (Willing as cited in Peacock, 2001). He proposes a balanced teaching style and suggests teachers try to accommodate all learning styles. Tuan (2011) also confirms this idea that it is important to find the right balance in instructional methods in order to accommodate different students in the classroom. In order to optimize styles, Oxford et al. (1992) suggests teachers assess the learning styles of both the teacher and the students, to create teacher-student style matching, and to provide activities with different groupings, including different learning styles in lesson plans (Oxford et al., as cited in Peacock, 2001). He also notes that when there is a match between teacher styles and learner styles, students are likely to work harder and benefit much more from their ESL classes (Peacock, 2001). In addition, Irvine and York (1995) echoes that statement by saying that “students are capable of learning, provided the learning environment attends to a variety of learning styles” (Irvine & York as cited in Tuan, 2011, p. 287). Taking into consideration the above research, as a teacher, it is hard to disagree with this point of view; however, it is sometimes nearly impossible to satisfy every student’s learning style and needs. You can accommodate the style to your learners, but can you 100% match it? Yes, it is argued that if the style is not accommodated properly, poor attendance, dropouts, bad relationships may be present and it will lead to ineffective learning (Tuan, 2011). What can educators do to improve the performance learners of English as second language, with consideration to the information discussed about different styles and its effect on learning?

It is suggested that learners' contributions can also serve as a foundation for the teacher to obtain information regarding their knowledge, understanding, and degree of agreement (Tuan, 2011). The lack of such information, in many cases, might cause the teacher to develop lessons in an undesirable direction that fails to meet learners' interests, preferences, concerns, and needs" (Tuan, 2011, p. 288). Peacock (2001) defines second language teaching styles as "natural, habitual and preferred ways of teaching new information and skills in the classroom" (p. 3). Therefore, it is important to understand learners, apply appropriate teaching strategies and techniques, and improve communication. For this reason, learners should give the teacher opportunities to decide how to adjust and develop the lesson to best benefit them. As suggested by Harker (1988), it is through the teacher-learner communication process that "expectations are created for how the lesson needs to be organized" (Harker as cited in Tuan, 2011, p. 288). In fact, when learners are asked about their learning preferences and how they match with a teacher's teaching style, the majority of students would answer positively towards approaches that are geared towards satisfying their needs within a variety of activities.

Depending on the level of students and their abilities, the teacher's style will impact learners and boost their comprehension level. In addition, the more prepared the teacher is, the more she can motivate learners to learn new materials in a second language. Targeting all areas of the language benchmarks will benefit students and increase their chances for better and faster improvements, regardless of their cultural differences. Therefore, affective learning/temperament learning styles take students' emotions, values and feelings into consideration. The focus is on the learner (i.e. his or her motivation, level of engagement, interaction and reception to feedback) and how he or she reacts to learning opportunities (Renou, n.d.). Peacock (2001) also agrees that in order for a teacher to reach each student and make sure that he/she understands, it is essential to motivate and stimulate students as much as possible by providing useful and life-important tasks to learn and balance the range of difficult materials. Another approach is to make a habit of making visuals as visual learners

will definitely find a value and learn more by looking at picture boards, sketches, films, and videos. The third approach is to use repetitive tasks wisely and extend value from the group exercises, targeting students who prefer working with others. Tuan (2011) also suggests not filling every minute of class lecturing or simply talking between the exercises; short breaks will provide students with opportunities to analyze the information they hear. In addition, in order to provide the chance for everybody to speak English and become engaged in the learning process, it is essential to group students with partners from another country to maximize their opportunities. The more learners speak, the more they get involved in the process of acquiring a second language. Hence, the more opportunity the students get to learn new material and practice the language, the greater their acquisition will be. And lastly, according to Tuan (2011), the lesson organization can also determine the ability of students to comprehend certain materials in a second language. A bad organization can lead to poor listening, decreased comprehension, an inability to cooperate with others, and a lack of participation with others.

In highlight of the above discussion, the statement of cultural identity as the most significant factor in acquiring English as a second language is not totally confirmed in the literature. Despite the fact that culture does influence adult students' ability to learn another language, the combinations of all aspects can lead to second language acquisition. In addition, without some minimum effort, no second language learning is possible. Adult learners' abilities are very different and relate to the time spent in a different country, motivation, innate characteristics (e.g. memory), and personal learning styles. It also depends on the correct teaching methods that play a crucial role in keeping students actively involved in acquiring a second language. To be able to provide each student with an opportunity to succeed, the primary goal of an educator, despite the cultural differences of a particular learner, is to match learning and teaching styles together to improve the conditions for faster and more effective learning.

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INTERACTIVE WAYS OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR EAL STUDENTS AND ITS IMPACT ON LEARNING

ABSTRACT:

Social Media in EAL classroom presents a unique way to demonstrate interest, innovative approaches, and social interaction among EAL students. Using web-based applications also makes lessons more educational, vibrant and useful for students. In addition, the introduction and rapid development of new interactive technologies to learn English became possible using non-directed teaching methods. Therefore, there are multiple ways for EAL students to learn English. Within the fast involvement of interactive technologies and social media, it is getting easier and easier to obtain desirable results within a shorter period of time. The way EAL students learn an additional language using interactive technologies may seriously impact their potential outcomes and bring excellent rewards.

The impact of social media in the past few years has really changed the way people think and learn new information these days. Nowadays it is quite difficult to imagine our lives without modern technologies and things we could not do in the past. Social media cannot only improve our personal communication level, but also help us learn new and interesting information that otherwise would be hard to obtain. That, certainly, includes the idea of learning English as an additional language (EAL). With recent well-developed applications over the Internet, web-based education is becoming more popular and more effective (Tsou, Wang & Tzeng, 2004). Using web-based applications within the classroom also makes lessons more educational, vibrant and useful for students.

Despite the fact that English has always been taught in a more traditional way (teacher-student), the introduction and rapid development of new interactive technologies to learn English became possible using a self-directed approach (for example, English online). In fact, interaction has been identified as a “key component of the online education experience” (Cobb, 2009, p. 245). In addition, with the introduction of the i-phone,

for example, many mobile applications are now easily accessible and can be reached 24 hours a day. Ngyen & Pham (2011) state that “one of the benefits of mobile learning (m-learning) is the ability to provide and access learning materials anytime anywhere” (p. 22). In their personalized m-learning model, they suggest that context is the information that has impact on learners during learning activities. They identify several factors which influence how to adapt course materials for each learner: location, time, manner, and learner’s knowledge are contextual factors taken into account in their model (Ngyen & Pham, 2011). Comparing this m-learning with English online model, it is possible to assume that students will obtain some benefits of learning English using a self-directed approach and appreciate the advantages of the modern mobile technological process.

“By giving learners more choice, the technologies tend to empower one to control when, how, and what they learn (Webb, 2006).”

However, if a self-directed approach does not seem so attractive for some, implementing interactive social media within the classroom setting might benefit other students even more. In fact, using an interactive way to learn an additional language brings potential and rewards not only to a student, but also a teacher. In order to make her/his lessons more vivid and diverse, social media is a great tool to use in the classroom setting. Hence, according to Webb (2006), informational computer technology (ICT)-based learning is considered a tool for transforming a learning process and learners themselves. By giving learners more choice, the technologies tend to empower one to control when, how, and what they learn (Webb, 2006). In addition, using computers or social media in the classroom may help teachers confirm some theories or lead into a new discussion topic. However, a novice teacher should use this method with care in order not to over stimulate the social media resources (Webb, 2006). Moreover, implementing ICT as a

mean of supporting and facilitating learning can benefit EAL students with visual interaction.

Interacting with a teacher using Skype technology, for example, is another method of achieving positive results. Skype is easily accessible and free of charge. Therefore it is a great way to interact with a teacher. The advantage of using Skype is that it is occurring in real time; the teacher is present and is able to help and answer students’ questions. The teacher’s presence provides subject matter expertise and facilitates active learning (Cobb, 2009). Unlike Skype, using Youtube to learn English is another bright social media tool where a teacher can record herself/himself and present it to the entire class. The advantage of this tool is that students can pause and rewind material and listen to it over and over again. At the same time, students still see a familiar teacher’s face and it makes the learning process more motivating, interesting and inspiring.

However, some might argue that in spite of the multiple benefits of using Skype and Youtube technologies, both are only good for those students who are familiar with different ICT-applications. As noted by Webb (2006), previous IT experiences can definitely contribute to faster learning. At the same time, Webb (2006) also states that learning languages through ICT poses new challenges for educators and adult learners because the evidence-based practice is somehow limited and the learners have different levels of education and experience. This in fact is true, especially when dealing with English learners who come to Canada with either higher education and higher abilities or learners who have never even attended elementary school, who are not familiar with ICT technologies, and whose level of English is very basic. Will social media interaction be suitable and beneficial for them?

According to the research done by National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum (2011), access to actual

meaning can be improved even for early stage learners through a variety of social media applications and tools: speech, graphs, diagrams and videos. Moreover, using models for simulations and key visuals can in fact help EAL learners move from observations and naming objects to the more complex language of explanation, prediction and generalization. Also, according to Ofulue (2011), we should not forget that language learning is a “skill-based venture” (p. 92). Therefore, it requires an ample opportunity (exposure and use) to ensure the development of the skills. Thus, ICT makes it possible and provides learners with multiple opportunities. Besides, ICT-technology also allows EAL learners to combine spoken, written, visual and graphic output that will eventually support students to be able to successfully build upon their current linguistic competency and improve the level of their confidence (NALDIC, 2011).

More importantly, using online tools increases learners’ opportunities and their motivation to communicate in English, especially if the teacher is also involved in this process. It can be attained through email exchanges that allow teachers to assess students’ writing, exchange assignments, clarify some ideas, and provide feedback. In addition, students can email each other and practice their language skills this way. According to Ruhe (1998), email exchange demonstrates the remarkable ability of the technology to “strip away visible signs of gender and ethnic differences” (p. 92), thus it creates a totally different climate and allows students to communicate “as souls” (p. 92). Hence, anxiety reduction and privacy make students communicate more openly. Besides, using Internet resources can also help them stimulate collaborative thinking, lead to discussion on certain topics, and provide possibilities for practicing the language (Ruhe, 1998). If questions arise within the classroom, having the Internet access gives a teacher an opportunity to answer students’ questions without any delays. As noted by NALDIC (2011), the Internet can be used to stimulate exploratory talk and encourage collaboration in the construction of learning.

The Internet provides EAL students with valuable practical exercises: listening, grammar, pronunciation, and online dictionaries. Getting instant feedback can motivate students even more and encourage them to refer to online resources more often. For a

teacher, it is also an invaluable and powerful tool where quick assessment is done within minutes. According to Tannenbaum (1996), many educators have come to recognize that alternative assessments are an important means of gaining a dynamic picture of students’ linguistic development and improvement. It is particularly useful for students with English as a second language as it involves strategies that ask students to show what they are able to do (Tannenbaum, 1996).

In addition to the fact that online media resources not only help teachers to assess EAL students more efficiently, they also allow students to become closer to the culture of the language they are studying. As noted by Tanriverdi & Apak (2008), the “media provides an excellent source for discovering new places and making our students more culturally competent” (p. 6). Authentic materials not only provide valuable opportunities to listen to the target language and native speakers, they also identify opportunities for students to differentiate the majority of small nuances related to the target language. Besides, it allows EAL students to hear the variety of different accents, and intonations, and to get the knowledge of lexical items and frequent idiomatic expressions (Tanriverdi & Apak, 2008).

However, using authentic resources might cause significant problems when teaching low-level EAL students. A critical element is to find materials suitable to the students’ English level (Dupuis, 2011) and connect it to the social media within a reasonable and accessible limit. Language input far beyond the learner’s level (original movies, TV, online videos) shown within the classroom environment will result in no comprehension, and therefore no persistence by the learner (Yang, 2005). On the other hand, social media is a perfect source for teaching pronunciation (as it is suitable for both high and low-level students). Focusing on pronunciation, including rhythm and expression, develops phonemic awareness and fluency, listening comprehension, and verbal expression (Condelli, Cronen, & Silva-Paculla, 2009).

Another way the students are able to demonstrate what they can do is having an opportunity to present materials in PowerPoint presentations. PowerPoint is an extremely valuable and visual application that allows

students to practice an oral presentation, have a peer discussion, exchange their opinions, and share ideas with others (Wang, 2011). Even though the grammatical errors may be still present, it gives students a chance to practice a language and show their work in an easy and colorful format using a computer-based application. Moreover, according to Wang’s findings (2011), “students acknowledged the power of cooperation; through communication with group members, they benefited from team work” (p. 919). In addition, PowerPoint presentations, when used in the classroom, provide an ample opportunity for visual learners to absorb the material faster. Therefore, it is crucially important for the teacher to present information in an accessible format in order to accelerate students’ learning.

In order to make the lecture more interesting in a social interactive way, educators can use an Internet-based application called “Brain-shark” that allows them to apply a voice recording, narration, video and other valuable tools. Presented this way, PowerPoint slides will stand out and bring maximum benefits to the students. It also accelerates students’ learning in terms of working cooperatively with an instructor and their peers. This allows students to receive information in a more accessible way with graphics, interaction, narration, and plenty of opportunities for further development and learning new ideas. Learning can help in many ways if it is organized in the right way.

However, learning new things becomes more complicated if information is presented inefficiently, especially if the learner has very little experience with the topic. Individuals create knowledge from experience rather than just from received instruction (Florez & Terrill, 2003). Different learning styles reflect learning preferences that can change within various situations. Learning therefore is affected by learning styles and where students are able to employ multiply learning styles, learning outcomes are higher (Felder, Reid, Claxton & Murell, Elison as cited in Mulalic et al., 2009). Since learning styles play a dominant role in the learning process, educators should not neglect addressing it. According to James & Gardner (1995), learning styles can be described as “the way in which learners perceive, process, store, and recall attempts of learning” (James & Gardner as cited in Küçük, Genç-Kumtepe & Taşçi, 2010, p.

41). Therefore, it is more beneficial to be able to see the information in a way that accelerates the learning process faster.

In closings, there are multiple ways for EAL students to learn English. Within the booming involvement of interactive technologies and social media, it is getting easier and easier to obtain desirable results within a shorter period of time. Visuals, graphics, and simulations will result in achieving higher learning outcomes than would otherwise be possible. The way EAL students learn an additional language using interactive technologies may seriously impact their final results. Learning can be achieved in many ways, however, with interactive social media, positive results can be reached much faster and more efficiently.

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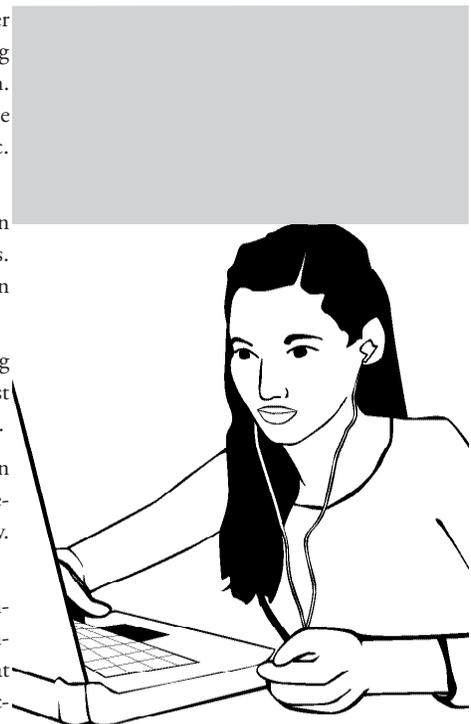
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UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF LAL STUDENTS-KEY ELEMENTS FOR PLANNING

Literacy, Academics and Language (LAL) students have more than just English to learn. This article will focus on the key elements necessary to attend to the needs of students with interrupted or limited prior schooling. To begin, I will describe broad characteristics that may describe this group of learners. From there, I explore four key elements that will help LAL students achieve academic success. These key instructional elements are suggestions for teachers who work with LAL learners both in an integrated EAL setting and for those teaching in a dedicated Literacy Academics and Language classroom.

Defining the LAL learner within the English as an Additional Language context can be very chal-

“It is important to understand that each student is unique and that definitions related to this group of learners can be broad and generalizations to the entire LAL learner context should be avoided.”

lenging. It is important to understand that each student is unique and that definitions related to this group of learners can be broad and generalizations to the entire LAL learner context should be avoided. However, throughout the literature, there are some consistencies regarding potential characteristics that may be attributed to LAL learners.

In Manitoba, I have observed that LAL learners’ bring with them diverse life experiences that have helped to shape their formal educational background. The research done by Marshall and DeCapua,

(2011) has helped to create a framework from which we can examine the experiences lived by our students. Individually, students may exhibit different characteristics. Some to the characteristics that can be attributed to these learners include a strong emphasis on group interdependence instead of a focus on individual achievement, a strong experience in oral tradition and pragmatic knowledge rather than a focus on written communication and academic knowledge; life experiences that have little print available in their primary or home language and where children learn based on what is concrete and functional rather than our Western, hypothetical and abstract teachings, (DeCapua and Marshall, 2011).

Added to the varying educational life experiences that LAL learners bring to our classrooms, these students may also have experienced the triple trauma paradigm. Although one cannot generalize this paradigm to all LAL learners, as teachers, we must explore the possibility that throughout their lives, some of the students who we are teaching may have experienced trauma through the direct effects of war, civil unrest, poverty; trauma through flight and life as a refugee and trauma through settlement and adjustment experience to life in Canada and to a new school environment in a new language.

Keeping these generalized characteristics of the LAL learner in mind, along with the challenges that they may have experienced through traumatic events lends itself to a very complex and layered educational setting. Teachers need to be cognizant of all of these factors as they work to address the academic and social needs of these students.

One way to assist teachers with planning and programming for LAL learners is to examine four key elements to the academic success of LAL learners. These four keys encourage the elements of a Mutually Adaptive Learning Paradigm or MALP (DeCapua and Marshall, 2011) model where salient academic and cultural factors become part of instruction. Using a MALP along with the following elements can help to foster an additive approach to English language learning as teachers draw on the lived experiences of students to make learning meaningful and relevant.

KEY ELEMENT #1

Draw on Student’s Background Experiences

Develop lessons around experiences that pertain to those that your learners have had.

Although students may have experienced interruptions to their formal education, or they may not have had a formal education at all, students did not stop learning throughout their life experiences. This approach to learning encourages an acceptance of diversity and welcomes a richness of knowledge

from different ways of thinking.

Students need to connect with literature on three basic levels: text to text, text to self, and self to the world. All students bring something to the classroom. Becoming familiar with the students experiences, culture and language allows a teacher to engage students in literacy experiences that connect with their diverse backgrounds, thereby building on this knowledge.

Focus on requiring academic ways of thinking and make tasks accessible by providing students with familiar language and content (DeCapua and Marshall, 2011).

KEY ELEMENT #2

Engage students in challenging, theme-based curriculum that is meaningful and relevant.

Themes should be based on prior knowledge and be linked to curricular outcomes in order to develop academic concepts through listening, speaking, reading and writing. When picking themes it may be useful to consider “universal” types of themes that are relevant to the lives of the students. For example, family, education, music, and friendships are some universal themes that can be explored.

Once themes are identified, teachers can then relate them to the content areas by developing relevant lessons around them. Students will move from immediate relevance to future relevance when exposed to meaningful universal themes.

Example:

- Universal Theme: Family
- o Content Area Science: Unit- The Science of Genetics
- ☒ Family traits (Eye colour, hair colour etc.)
- ☒ Genes and DNA (Punnet

Square)

Disease in the family- healthy choices and habits

KEY ELEMENT #3

Organize Collaborative Activities and Scaffold Instruction to Build Students’ Academic English Proficiency in content areas.

- Many students will benefit from collaborative activities that are scaffolded to include an oral component before any written work is produced. This is supported by DeCapua and Marhsall’s (2011) research on a Mutually Adaptive Learning Paradigm. In this model, students move from oral tasks to written word and from shared responsibilities to individual responsibilities.

Example

- Universal Theme: Family
- o Content Area Science: Unit- The Science of Genetics

Collaborative group work done orally- tell the other group members what you look like physically. Use description words like tall, short, light, dark etc.

Write down as a group all the different descriptions as a list.

Describe yourself to another person by writing 4 sentences about your physical appearance using the words on the list.

KEY ELEMENT #4

Teach reading strategies explicitly to students.

Some students will need explicit instruction in an age appropriate manner of the five components of reading. These areas are phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Once students can decode text, checking for comprehension is crucial. Teachers can use reading texts that are meaningful and relevant to students by generating lists of topics that they want to read about and then finding appropriate readers with which they can be taught explicitly to read.

Students can use read-alouds, guided reading, reciprocal reading and other techniques to work on the five components of reading.

Creating confident students who value school and value themselves as learners is the job of the EAL teacher working with LAL learners. When teachers follow the four keys, they create classroom communities in which students build confidence, experience academic success and engage more fully in the curriculum.

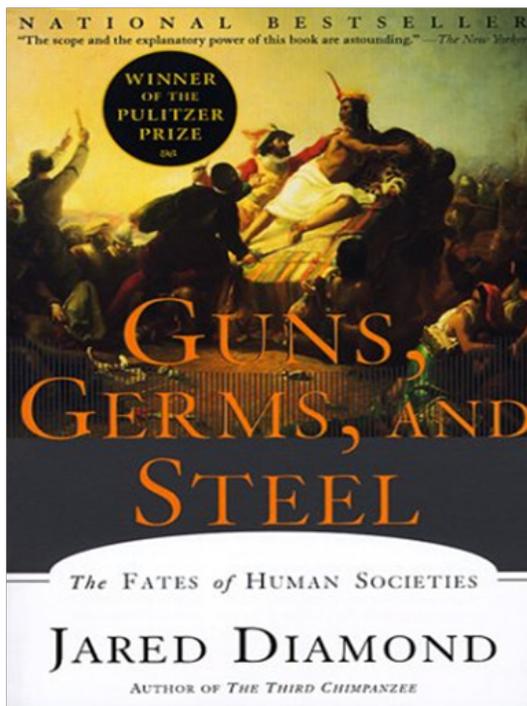
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STRADDLING THE PAST AND THE PRESENT TO FACE THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE: A REVIEW OF TWO BOOKS ON THE PHENOMENON OF GLOBALIZATION

One of the reasons I have entered into the EAL teaching field is the dynamic nature of second language acquisition (SLA). It is a field that encompasses all areas of the academic world such as biology, history, politics, technology, and psychology. It is this interdependence and interaction which makes SLA both exciting and challenging to study. In order to fully comprehend the complexity of SLA one must understand the phenomenon of Globalization. What is Globalization? Who are the major players? What are its benefits and drawbacks? How has Globalization emerged? How does this phenomenon relate to SLA and the maintenance of one's first language (L1)?

These are just some of the questions that we must ask in our profession as EAL teachers if we are truly going to embrace our responsibilities in shaping the course of Globalization. In other words, we can either be swept away in the present current of Globalization or we can master the rapids and choose our own course of action based upon research, experience, and reflection. I thereby offer two brief book reviews concerning the rise and consequences of Globalization. Both of these books complement each other as the first one argues that geography, not intelligence, is the ultimate cause for the fates of societies, while the second book argues for maintaining cultural diversity in a world fast becoming homogeneous. I also offer my perspective on how these readings may help EAL teachers reflect upon their practice



and improve their understanding of the interaction between the past, present, and future. How these reflections may affect pedagogy, if at all, is up to each individual teacher to determine.

GUNS, GERMS, AND STEEL: THE FATES OF HUMAN SOCIETIES — JARED DIAMOND

This book will be of profound interest to those EAL teachers who are interested in the interactions between science and history. As teachers of students from around the world, we should not only be knowledgeable about the English language but also about issues related to societies and cultures. If we are teaching English as a global language then we should understand why English, and not one of the Papuan languages, was chosen as this international standard. It is

not enough to cite that English was chosen because of the economic and military powers of English speaking nations. We must go further back to the cradle of life and explore ultimate causes for how these nations were geographically primed to become superpowers in the first place. In other words, what ultimately caused the European powers to travel across the seas and conquer the inhabitants of the New World instead of the Aztec powers traveling to Europe and subjugating Europeans? Jared Diamond attempts to answer this question by presenting a coherent argument for how human societies were formed and evolved over the last 13,000 years.

This book challenges the reader to confront one's assumptions about civilizations and the people who form them. What becomes apparent is the role that geography plays in the rise of particular civilizations and the trades between them. One civilization is not more "advanced" than the other; each are perfectly suited to the land to which they are tied. Conquest of other civilizations are largely only possibly by the invaders bringing with them unique products arising from their homelands, whether these are guns, germs, or steel. This book also causes us to reflect upon our value judgements of current "Modern" and "Stone Age" civilizations.

Should we be advocating for particular indigenous societies to give

up their way of life so that they can better join the global community? Is joining this “modern” civilization in their best interest or should we listen, instead of preach, about how to live off the land? Intelligence is a human condition and all peoples and civilizations have developed the capacity to tame the hazards of the land that their ancestors have cared for. Therefore the rise of “modern” civilization and the range of the English language should not deprive indigenous peoples of their voice concerning their own land. It may be beneficial for indigenous peoples to learn English, but not necessarily so that they can live as we do but to teach the rest of us the importance of their land and how best to sustain the fruits of it. It is hard to say what the fate of societies will be in the future as globalization

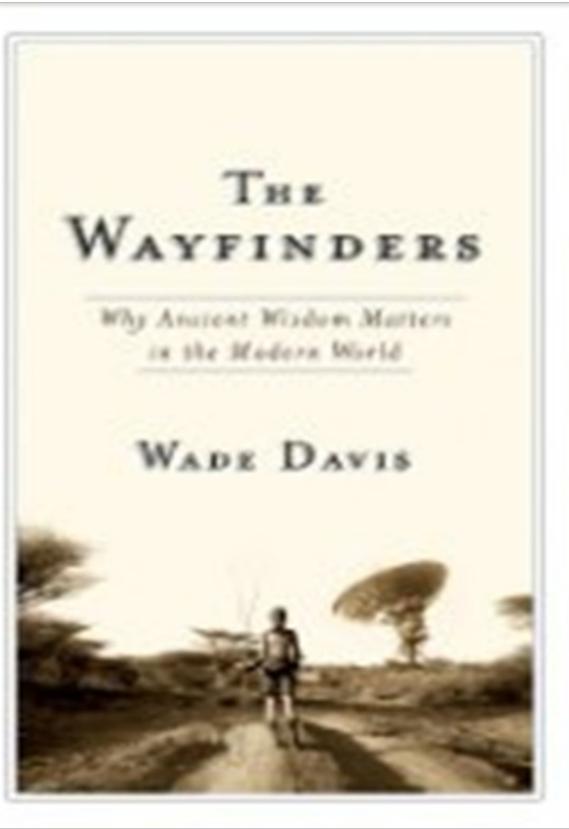
continues to spread once localized resources to every corner of the world, but an understanding of the past compels, if not ensuring, the equal participation of all peoples in determining how we proceed. However; while intelligence is a human condition, conquest is also, unfortunately, a prevalent quality of our species.

THE WAYFINDERS: WHY ANCIENT WISDOM MATTERS IN THE MODERN WORLD – WADE DAVIS

The previous book discussed above was mainly concerned with how the World’s societies emerged and changed over time as a function of the potential of the land from where they originated. The Wayfinders from Wade Davis takes the discussion a step further by suggesting that the health of our World is dependent upon an understanding of the wisdom maintained by indigenous peoples. “Together the myriad of cultures makes up an intellectual and spiritual web of life that envelops the planet and is every bit as important to the well being of the planet as is the biological web of life that we know as the biosphere” (Davis, 2009, P.2). The premise of this book is that indigenous peoples are masters of the land who, over the course of generations, have passed down their accumulated knowledge through their language, the loss of which serves as the “canary in the coal mine”, warning us that vital

wisdom is at risk of being silenced. “Every language is an old-growth forest of the mind, a water-shed of thought, an ecosystem of spiritual possibilities” (Davis, 2009, p. 3).

This book acts as a point of reflection about our role in spreading Global English. Just as we should fish, hunt, and farm in an environmentally responsible manner, we should promote and teach English in an ethnoculturally responsible manner. Certainly we should continue to teach English as it is an indispensable language in today’s world, but we should also promote the maintenance and respect of other languages as well. English may be touted as a global language, but it does not hold all of the ancient wisdom that is embedded within the World’s other 7,000 languages spoken today, half of which are not currently being taught (Davis, 2009). Teaching and promoting English while also maintaining and valuing other languages is no easy task, but with careful reflection and negotiation with L1 speakers it is possible to devise an ethnoculturally responsible pedagogy. Cultural diversity is more than aesthetically desirable, it is indispensable for the health of our planet in both spirit and body. The ideas in this book should therefore inform our philosophies and ideologies which in turn determines our practice.



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<input type="checkbox"/> Para- Professional <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher-Assistant <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer	\$25.00	_____	
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*You are a member of the Manitoba Teachers' Society if you pay MTS fees and teach in the public school system, OR in the Winnipeg School Division Adult EAL Program.

You are **NOT a member of the Manitoba Teachers' Society if you teach in a private school, OR in a college or university

Please make **cheque** payable to: **TEAL Manitoba Membership**

Complete form and mail with payment to:

**TEAL Manitoba Membership
c/o June Shymko
775 Bonner Ave.
Winnipeg, MB R2G 2J8**

Need Information? Email j.shymko@shaw.ca Phone 668-4217

OFFICE USE			
Paid by Self or Other _____	Cheque no. _____	Receipt no. _____	
Deposit date _____	Excel date _____	Journal date _____	TESL Canada date _____

The personal information you provide is strictly for the use of processing applications, the mailing of publications, providing privileges, generating statistical information related to the administration of TEAL Manitoba and, where possible, emailing information and invitations from the TEAL Manitoba Executive.

TESL Canada Educational Foundation

Teachers, did you know that TESL Canada has an educational fund for students?

Purpose of the Funding:

Funding is available for different educational purposes:

- To assist ESL learners in continuing their education, either by taking a course that assists other ESL learners in some way, or by working on a project that is useful as a learning resource for the ESL community.
- To assist ESL organizers working on a project with ESL learners; the project should create a useful learning resource for the ESL community.
- To sponsor a speaker at TESL Canada conferences
- To assist learners at the Learners Conference in a way decided by the Learners Conference Chair.

Criteria:

Applications are evaluated according to the degree in which they comply with the purpose of the Foundation and purpose of the funding. Only one recipient can be awarded in a fiscal year, between Oct. 1 and Sept. 30. Funds can be awarded annually, preferably beginning October 1st.

Eligibility:

Any ESL learner currently in an ESL school or in a volunteer ESL organization who is recommended by the board of a provincial affiliate of TESL Canada.

Value:

Funding is available up to \$500.
The amount may vary.

Time Frame:

The project should be completed within 12 months after the funding.

If you have any questions, please contact the TESL Canada office at:

admin@tesl.ca
604-298-0312.

Encourage interested students to visit **www.tesl.ca** for application details.

