



TESL New Brunswick Newsletter June 2025

What's Happening?



Hello TESL NB community,

I hope this newsletter finds you well. The days are finally getting warmer, and yes, it took a bit longer than many of us would have liked but I think we can safely pack away our winterwear.

We began 2025 with the announcement of a **Celebrate the Learning** contest where we encouraged language learners from New Brunswick to share their language learning experiences in creative ways. We were truly amazed by the entries we received! The winners of the contest and their spectacular works are featured in this issue beginning on page 6.



In addition, this issue of the newsletter is filled with a highlight of one of the conferences attended by a fellow TESL NB member, as well as a summary and highlights from our own Spring 2025 professional learning event in Saint John on page 4.

We invite you to enjoy this five-star read. It's a great way to recognize the outstanding contributions of our TESL NB community and stay connected with what our colleagues have been up to. This is our last newsletter until September but keep in touch and we wish you all a wonderful summer!

Sincerely,
Erica Thomas
President of TESL NB



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Letter from the TESL NB president.....1

A Renewing Experience at the TESOL International Convention.....2, 3

TESL NB Spring Event Review.....4

Presentation: *Your Class's Next Binge.....5*

Celebrate the Learning Winners.....6, 7, 8

Thank you Presenters.....8

Geoff's Teaching Tip.....9

Stay Tuned.....9

Photo Gallery..... 10

A Renewing Experience at the TESOL International Convention 2025

Submitted by: *Raya Khedheri*

Earlier this year, I had the incredible opportunity to attend the 2025 TESOL International Convention in Long Beach, California. As a second-year EAL coach with the ASD-S district, supporting schools, educators, and staff, I knew this experience would be impactful—and it exceeded all expectations.

As we headed to the conference, the United States was grappling with numerous social and political challenges, including debates around DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion), budget cuts in education, and broader policy tensions. Despite this backdrop, the TESOL conference stood in stark contrast. It was a celebration of inclusion, collaboration, and global connection—a reminder of the power of education to bring people together.



What struck me most was the sense of renewal I felt in my professional journey. Surrounded by a vibrant community of educators from around the world, I was reminded that, regardless of our cultural or linguistic backgrounds, we share a common goal: to support multilingual learners (MLLs) and empower them to thrive. These students are not defined by what they lack. They enrich our classrooms with the strengths they bring.

A recurring theme throughout the conference was the importance of connection and compassion. Language acquisition and academic growth will come in time, but to reach those goals, we must first build trust and relationships. Our students need to know we're in their corner, that we see them, believe in them, and are here to support them every step of the way.

The conference offered an overwhelming variety of sessions, making it difficult to choose. I focused primarily on topics relevant to K–12 education, especially translanguaging and how to support students in mainstream classrooms. My travel partner, whose focus is on exceptionalities in language learning, attended a different but equally enriching set of sessions. There truly was something for everyone.

While I won't detail every session, I walked away with a wealth of practical strategies, tools, and fresh ideas. I learned how AI can make learning more meaningful, how to turn a simple text into an engaging podcast, and how slam poetry can foster multilingual expression in fun and powerful ways. I discovered innovative Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approaches, like having students create a movie soundtrack for a novel—an imaginative alternative to the traditional essay in education.

If you ever have the chance to attend a language learning conference, whether international, provincial, or virtual, I wholeheartedly recommend it. These opportunities not only enhance our ability to support students, but also strengthen our sense of purpose as inclusive, reflective educators.

Each session sparked new ideas I'm excited to share with colleagues and implement in schools. I'm still going through the downloaded presentation slides, and every time I revisit them, I find another gem to apply or pass along.

What stood out most for me, though, wasn't just the new information—it was the inspiration. As educators, we must be lifelong learners. Attending this conference reminded me that professional development isn't only about gaining knowledge; it's also about reigniting our passion for the work we do and recognizing the meaningful impact we have on students' lives. This event was more than a professional learning opportunity. It was a gathering of global voices working toward a shared mission: advancing language learning in all its forms. I left feeling energized, empowered, and more committed than ever to advocating for inclusive practices and asset-based approaches in education.

If you ever have the chance to attend a language learning conference, whether international, provincial, or virtual, I wholeheartedly recommend it. These opportunities not only enhance our ability to support students, but also strengthen our sense of purpose as inclusive, reflective educators.

Raya Khedheri was the recipient of one of two bursaries awarded, by TESL NB, to attend the TESOL 2025 International Convention & Expo in Long Beach, California, USA, March 18-21, 2025.

★ **Please stay tuned for the Fall newsletter when you can read about bursary recipient Kathy Whynot's experience attending the *Canadian Association of Applied Linguistics*, May 30th to 2nd of June, 2025.**



TESL NB Professional Learning Event

Submitted by Camila Andrade



The TESL NB Professional Learning Event held at Saint John High School on April 26th this year brought together teachers and students to share ideas on how to better support newcomer learners in our classrooms and communities. The day was divided into three sessions, each offering real stories, useful tools, and practical strategies to help English language learners feel more welcomed, confident, and included.

The first session was a heartfelt panel discussion with four newcomer students and two EAL (English as an Additional Language) teachers. They shared personal experiences about coming to a new country and starting school in a different language. The students spoke about common misunderstandings, such as the assumption that all newcomers share the same religion or language. They explained how important it is for teachers to see them as individuals and take time to learn about their backgrounds, learning styles, and particular needs. The students asked for more patience in the classroom, saying they feel more supported when they aren't rushed to answer questions or put on the spot. They appreciated teachers who check in with them regularly, notice signs of bullying, and use visuals, gestures, and simple language to make lessons clearer. The teachers also shared tools they use to support multilingual learners, like translating, writing while speaking, explaining rules clearly, and being flexible with time. The main takeaway was the importance of building trusting relationships and boosting students' confidence every day.

The second session explored how games and interactive activities can help adult learners feel more engaged and relaxed in class. The presenter showed how games like bingo, role plays, and alphabet activities can make learning fun while improving speaking, listening, and teamwork skills. Games also help reduce fear of speaking in front of others, but all must be aware of how important it is to match each game to the learners' age, level, and goals, and to clearly explain how the activity connects to what they are learning. Adults bring rich life experience to the classroom, so activities should involve real-life situations whenever possible.

The final session introduced the idea of using TV shows to support language learning in a structured way. Watching TV helps learners hear natural English and learn new vocabulary in context, but it works best when students understand how it helps them. Teachers were encouraged to choose shows carefully based on student interest and level, and to add activities before and after watching to help learners process what they see and use new words in conversation. This approach can make learning more enjoyable and help build fluency over time.

Overall, the event reminded us how important it is to listen to learners, try creative teaching methods, and create safe, welcoming spaces where everyone feels valued. Whether working with children or adults, small changes in how we teach can make a big difference in how students learn and grow.

Your Class's Next Binge: What TV Provides Language Learners

Submitted by *Jean Charlebois* | *TESL NB Spring Workshop 2025*

In this presentation, I made the case for putting television to work in the language classroom. Drawing on Paul Nation's (2007) five conditions for effective language input, we explored how *Extensive Viewing* - intentional, supported engagement with video content - can provide learners with large quantities of authentic, rich, meaning-focused input.

Here's how TV checks every box:

It Must Be Processed in Large Quantities (Nation, 2007)

Television gives learners hours of input across multiple episodes, genres, and formats. Unlike isolated classroom texts, TV offers ongoing exposure to natural language in action.

It Must Be Familiar to the Learners (Nation, 2007)

From family sitcoms to workplace dramas, TV reflects daily life and familiar situations. This familiarity helps learners follow along, even when their language proficiency is still developing.

It Should Only Contain a Small Percentage of Unknown Vocabulary

To ensure learners aren't overwhelmed, it's important to select shows that fall within their lexical reach. By analyzing a show's subtitles using tools like the [Vocabulary Profiler on Lextutor.ca](#), instructors can estimate the percentage of high-frequency words and assess whether an episode offers appropriate coverage for a given level. This helps determine if learners are likely to understand enough of the language to make the input effective.

It Should Provide Opportunities to Gain Knowledge of Vocabulary (Nation, 2007)

Repetition across scenes and episodes supports vocabulary retention. Learners encounter key phrases and expressions in meaningful contexts, again and again.

It Should Interest the Learners So That They Want to Understand It (Nation, 2007)

TV is inherently engaging. Letting learners choose the show - or using culturally relevant Canadian content like [CBC GEM](#) - sparks intrinsic motivation and sustained attention.

Television and video have a lot to offer our language learners - not just as entertainment, but as rich, engaging sources of authentic input. Extensive Viewing is one way to harness this potential, and research shows it can support vocabulary growth, fluency, and motivation. In my own classroom, it's also generated a wide range of PBLA artifacts - from learner presentations to reflection journals, vocabulary logs, and more.

You already know how to support learners with listening and reading: by building purposeful tasks that focus attention, guide understanding, and lead to meaningful communication. The same task-based principles can be applied to viewing.

Whether it's using Canadian content to spark discussion, or designing activities that turn a TV episode into a springboard for vocabulary development, cultural exploration, or skills practice, your teaching toolkit is already well suited to this kind of work.

Television doesn't need to be just a Friday afternoon activity. With the right tasks, it becomes a powerful way to teach.

Congratulations to the “Celebrate the Learning” Winners!

Elementary School 1st Place (\$50)
Neriah Oladepo

"More Than Words" - Neriah Oladepo

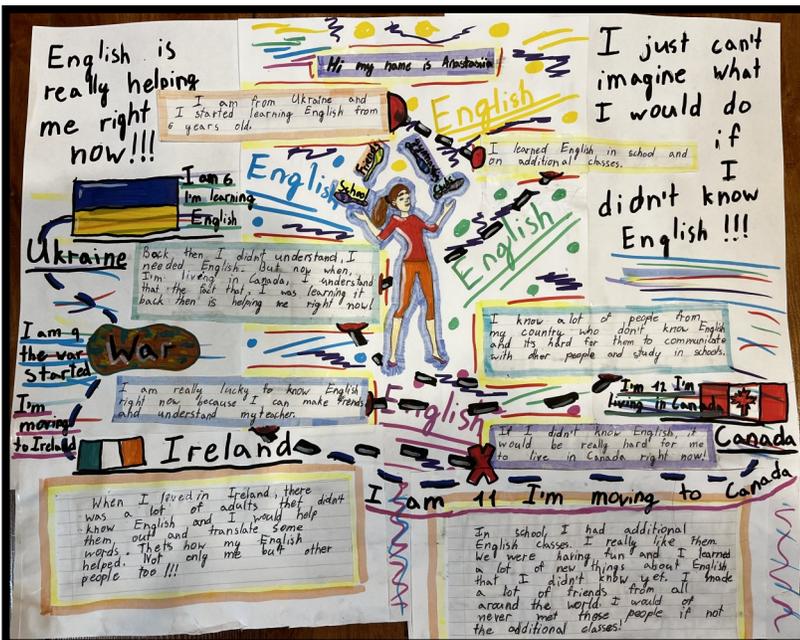
Emma has always liked English.
She doesn't even like relish.
She's in her own world when she's writing,
She says she feels like she's flying.
When she has a bad day, she writes,
She writes and writes and writes.
"English is a lot, it's all around us,
Just watch".
I remember her saying.
"The words we say,
The words that come to our mouths,
The language we need to talk to others,
It's all English!"
Emma amazes me more
And more every day,
And now she has made English
Her friend, shouldn't you try to?
Make English part of your life
Learn it,
And you will succeed.
"Just watch."

Middle School Honourable Mention (\$50)
Phoebe Oladepo

My Dear English - Phoebe Oladepo

When I hear English, I think about all the great authors like me and people from different places. For some, the original language they spoke wasn't English.
But here they are, making books that impress everyone, like one of my favourite authors, Kelly Yang. She uses the book "The Front Desk" series to talk about her life.
She moved from Hong Kong to California, United States, with her family at a young age.
She wrote how the main character of her book struggled just like her.
Mia Tang, the main character of "The Front Desk," didn't speak much English.
But with the courage to become a writer, it was accomplished.
Mia Tang and Kelly Yang both became famous writers and were very popular.
English can be hard, but with the courage to do something you want to do so severely, even if it's in a language, English, you can do it with the courage and support you have around you.

Middle School 1st Place (\$100)
Anastasia Umanets



Middle School 1st Place (\$100)
Haya Moustafa



Check out Haya's video entry on our TESL NB website.

Breaking Barriers with English: Personal Growth and Empowering Others

Language is not just a tool for communication; it is a bridge to new opportunities, cultures, and self-discovery. My journey with the English language began in the vibrant landscapes of Sri Lanka, a nation once under British colonial rule, where English was introduced early in the education system. However, my native language, Sinhala, remained my heart's comfort zone. Over time, learning English became more than an academic pursuit—it became my key to unlocking the world.

The First Steps: A Journey of Necessity and Passion

From childhood, English was part of my daily routine—woven into textbooks, classroom conversations, and even casual chats with friends. My parents encouraged me to speak English at home, and school reinforced its importance. Yet, the complexities of grammar and pronunciation initially felt like an uphill battle. Despite these challenges, I persisted because I understood that mastering English was not just about passing exams but about securing my future.

The world recognizes English as a global language, and for good reason. It is the language of diplomacy, business, science, and entertainment. Learning it opened doors to vast knowledge, from academic research to global news, ensuring that I was never left behind. Whether it was reading books, watching English movies without subtitles, or listening to inspiring TED Talks, every small effort contributed to my growth.

English proficiency has also allowed me to gain valuable international experiences. I voluntarily served as an Ambassador for Sri Lanka in the European Students Think Tank from October 2021 to June 2022, where I participated in discussions on global relations, contributed to related podcasts, and represented Sri Lanka at the Youth International Relations Summit in Russia (2019), where English served as the common language among representatives from various countries. Additionally, I attended work-related workshops in Vietnam, where English was essential for communication. I also had the opportunity to interpret between English and Sinhala at conferences, bridging linguistic and cultural gaps.

From Sri Lanka to Canada: A New Chapter Begins

When I arrived in Canada in June 2024, my ability to speak English became more crucial than ever. Suddenly, English was no longer just a subject in school—it was my daily means of survival, my gateway to community engagement, and my bridge to cross-cultural communication.

Becoming a Substitute Teacher in the Anglophone East School District was a defining moment. Teaching and interacting with students in English strengthened my confidence and refined my fluency. It was no longer just about speaking the language; it was about inspiring and educating others through it.



English: A Passport to Success and Connection

Fluency in English has given me more than just career opportunities—it has given me a voice in a multicultural society. From professional networking to making friends from different backgrounds, English has allowed me to truly integrate into my new home. Engaging with diverse communities, participating in discussions, and expressing my ideas fluently have all reinforced the power of language in shaping one's identity and confidence.

Yet, my journey is far from over. Language learning is a lifelong process, and I continue to improve by reading English books, listening to podcasts, watching news reports, and participating in English-speaking forums. The beauty of learning a language is that there is always room for growth.

Final Thoughts: Winning the World with English

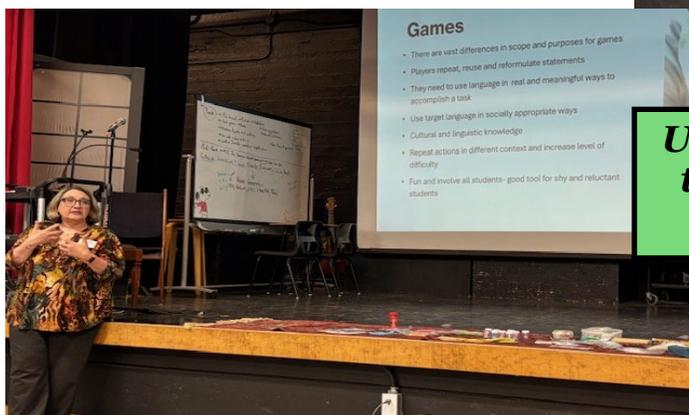
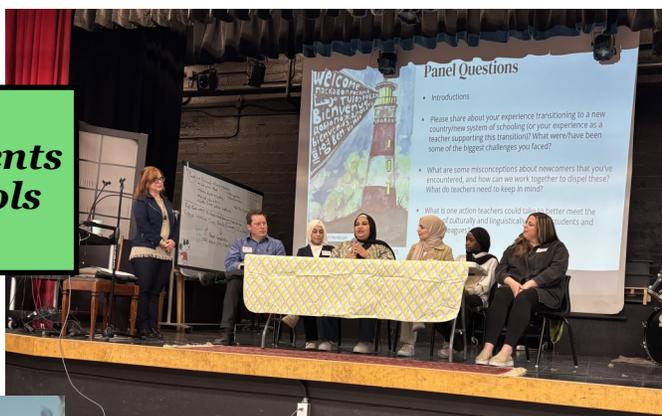
"Learning the English language broadens the path to success." This belief has guided me throughout my journey. Whether for higher education, better job opportunities, or meaningful global connections, English remains an essential tool. My story is a testament to the power of perseverance and the limitless possibilities that come with mastering a language.

For anyone embarking on their own English-learning journey, remember practice, exposure, and persistence are keys. Join English-speaking clubs, watch educational talks, and immerse yourself in the language daily. Before you know it, English will no longer be just a subject but a part of who you are.

As I continue my journey in Canada, I carry with me the lessons of my past and the aspirations of my future. English has not just been a language—it has been my companion, and my passport to a world of endless possibilities.

Thank you to our 2025 TESL NB Professional Learning event presenters!

Breaking Barriers: Supporting Newcomer Students and Educators in Our Schools



Using games and interactive activities to engage adult learners

Watch & Learn: Establishing an Extensive Viewing Programme in the LINC Classroom



TESL NB's Teaching Tip

Create a safe space

This may be as important as the skills you are teaching. Students need to know that they are walking into a positive and safe learning environment. On the teacher's part, be mindful of body language and tone, especially if language is a barrier to understanding. A positive tone of voice can say so much and put students at ease. And something as simple as a smile can create comfort immediately. A safe face is a safe place!



Building a respectful and inclusive community in your classroom is also vital. To help with this, create small learning centres with linguistic activities that are always out for students to work on before and after class. This is an organic way to encourage teamwork and, potentially, spoken interaction without it being a planned class activity. It is a way to lower inhibitions for someone that is perhaps nervous to enter the class.

Submitted by Geoff North



Stay Tuned !!!



The Fall issue of the TESL NB Newsletter will highlight Stacey's Spring event presentation:

"Using games and interactive activities to engage adult learners"

Using games and interactive activities to engage adult learners is an excellent strategy to create a dynamic, enjoyable, and effective learning environment. Adults often bring a wealth of experience, knowledge, and practical skills to the table, so it's important to design activities that respect their life experiences while keeping them engaged. Using the SMART Board as an introduction to interactive activities to aid in adults becoming comfortable with using games as a way to learn.



TESL NB

TESL NB is a professional organization affiliated with TESL Canada that aims to support ESL and EAL teachers and instructors working in a variety of institutions in the province of New Brunswick.

TESL NB provides ESL/ EAL educators with a venue for professional networking and professional development opportunities.

We welcome new members. Visit www.teslnb.ca/join-us/ to find out more.

LET'S CONNECT!

- www.teslnb.ca
- Facebook at TESLNB
- X @TESL_NB
- teslnewbrunswick@gmail.com

Please reach out if you want to get involved or know more. We believe in the power and importance of professional connections.



Photo Gallery- TESL NB Spring Event 2025

