

SETTLING IN

*Insights and Experiences in Teaching English
as an Additional Language in New Brunswick*



TESL NB Newsletter

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SPRING

From "The House of Light"
By Mary Oliver (1935-2019)

Somewhere a black bear
has just risen from sleep and is staring down the mountain.

All night
in the brisk and shallow restlessness of early spring
I think of her, her four black fists flicking the gravel, her tongue
like a red fire
touching the grass, the cold water.

There is only one question:
how to love this world.
I think of her rising
like a black and leafy ledge
to sharpen her claws against the silence of the trees.

Whatever else
my life is with its poems and its music and its glass cities,
it is also this dazzling darkness coming
down the mountain, breathing and tasting;
all day I think of her - her white teeth, her wordlessness, her perfect love.





Kathy in front of what her daughters call "the friendship tree"

PRESIDENT LETTER

Dear TESL NB members and community,

As we "settle in" to spring here in New Brunswick, I hope this newsletter finds you with a little time to enjoy the sun on your face, a warm cup of coffee or tea in hand, and a renewed sense of lightness and hope as we move into this vibrant season in our province.

I always think of Mary Oliver's poem "Spring" at this time of year, and I have included it here for those of you who enjoy poetry. "How to love this world," is indeed a provocative question, perhaps especially resonant in the complex global times we have been living through. I hope you are finding a way, in your own life, to keep loving the world.

Over the past few months, your TESL NB Board has been busy working on your behalf. As part of our mission to support you with opportunities for professional networking and learning, we launched two rounds of bursaries for members. I am very pleased to share that seven TESL NB members were awarded bursaries in March and April to pursue professional learning or to lead events in their communities.

In addition, your Board has been hard at work planning a wonderful day of professional learning, connection, and networking, scheduled for **Saturday, June 6, 2026, in Miramichi**, New Brunswick. I hope you will join us for what promises to be an uplifting day of community and conversation. Please look for more details in Vice-President Mallory Cunningham's letter to members.

With the goals of building connection, offering support, and celebrating joy, we were also pleased to launch the second annual "Celebrate the Learning" contest. This initiative highlights and honours multilingual learners and their language-learning journeys. Multilingual individuals of all ages were invited to share their experiences of learning English in a format that suited them, including creative writing, poetry, digital posters, videos, and more. Although the deadline has now passed (May 1), we are very much looking forward to recognizing the winners and sharing their brilliant work with all of you on June 6 when we gather in Miramichi.

Finally, I am delighted to welcome our new members. Between January and May, 27 new members joined our organization. Welcome! We are delighted you have chosen to be part of TESL NB, and we hope to meet many of you in person in June or at another upcoming event. At the heart of TESL NB is you, our members. Thank you for all that you contribute in your classrooms, programs, and communities.

Please enjoy this beautiful newsletter, once again curated by the outstanding Camila Andrade. If you feel inspired to contribute to our next newsletter, which is scheduled for publication in August 2026, please reach out to Camila at camilappa.dev@gmail.com. I know she would be thrilled to hear from you and to help bring your contribution to life. Thanks again for the work you do in your community and for being part of TESL NB! Valeu! Tausend Dank! Woliwon!

Yours in education,

Kathy



VICE PRESIDENT LETTER

Happy Spring TESL NB community!

With this season's theme of "settling in," I am delighted to share that I am beginning to feel settled in my role as TESL NB Vice President. Having been involved with TESL NB over the past several years, it is both an honour and a pleasure to now serve as part of the executive team.

One of the things I value most about our organization is the opportunity to connect with passionate educators from across the field whom I might not otherwise meet in my day-to-day work in K–12 education. I look forward to continuing to build those connections and to bringing together educators from diverse EAL contexts into our vibrant community.

By way of introduction, I currently serve as EST-EAL and SPR of English and EAL at Saint John High School. I have worked with multilingual learners in various capacities for the past 14 years, beginning my career with a life-changing experience teaching the New Brunswick curriculum at a school in Guizhou, China. After my time abroad living and working in a different culture really sparked my passion for working with multilingual learners. Those early experiences continue to shape my approach to teaching, learning and life today.

An especially rewarding part of settling into my new role has been collaborating with fellow TESL NB executive members to plan our upcoming spring event, [Teaching Together: Stories and Strategies](#). The event will take place on [June 6 at James M. Hill High School](#) in beautiful Miramichi, New Brunswick. In a world that increasingly pulls us online, we wanted to intentionally create space for in-person connection, providing an opportunity to come together, share our experiences, and learn from one another.

We are also pleased to offer a social gathering on the evening of Friday, June 5th, when we will meet for a river cruise. This will be a wonderful chance to connect in a more relaxed setting. As a preview of Saturday's program, we are excited to welcome one of our TESL NB board members, Ali Abu Zeid, who will share excerpts from his new novel, *Weight of My Voice*. The book has been described as "a journey across borders, through war, loss, resilience, and hope—told in a voice that has been judged, silenced, and misunderstood, yet refuses to break." We are so thankful to have Ali share part of his journey with us! Please keep an eye on your e-mails for more details about presentations and registration.

I hope you are beginning to settle into the spring season, enjoying the bits of warm weather and sun as they come. I have been settling into the Spring myself by going on walks in the evenings, listening to the birds as they re-emerge and thinking about what flowers I want to plant in my garden. I really hope that your Spring plans might include joining us in Miramichi on June 6th. I look forward to meeting and connecting with many of you there.

See you soon!

Mallory Cunningham

TESL NB'S PROFESSIONAL LEARNING EVENT

Whether you have been teaching English as an Additional Language for decades or are just finding your footing, this invitation is for you!

Join us for a day of networking and connection through shared stories, practical strategies, and meaningful conversations with peers.

For those travelling, a special room rate is available for TESL NB members at the Rodd Miramichi Hotel for the night of June 5th.

To book before May 6th, mention the group name "TESL New Brunswick" and Booking Confirmation #200631 when calling 1-800-565-7633 or 506-773-3111.

We are also excited to share that a Miramichi River Cruise has been organized for the evening of June 5th for members arriving that day.

EVENT DETAILS



June 6th, 2026 (Saturday)
from 9:00 AM to 2:45 PM




James M. Hill High School
Miramichi, New Brunswick

[Click here to register](#)

or reach out to
teslnewbrunswick@gmail.com
if you have any questions.



A close-up, warm-toned photograph of a person's face, partially obscured by shadows. A hand is resting on their forehead. The lighting is soft and golden, creating a serene and contemplative mood.

**"Keep your face always toward the sunshine,
and shadows will fall behind you."**

Walt Whitman

BREAK IT UP!

Teaching Tip By Geoff North

Try not to overwhelm your students by asking them to do too much, especially at the beginner level. Instead, have them focus on one thing at a time. Then, when they are ready, they can put it all together.

This is perhaps most important with listening exercises, as the student might not have anything visual to help support their understanding. When working on listening comprehension, try not to have your students listen for too much at once.

Break it down into different focuses and be clear with what you want them to listen for. For instance, if your students are listening to a short audio clip and the objective is for them to give you the main idea (including the who, where, when, and why), play the clip more than once. Have students only listen for the “who” first.

Then play it a second time, listening only for the “where.” And so on. Once students have listened for the different parts, then have them put all the information together for a short summary of what they have heard.



FINDING MY TEACHING STYLE

By Ezel Balikci

As a LINC teacher working with newcomers from around the world, I am always thinking about how to best support my students' language learning. Reading Chapter 11 of Vivian Cook's *Second Language Learning and Language Teaching* gave me a valuable chance to reflect on the different styles I use in my classroom and why.

Some styles, like the academic approach, rely heavily on grammar and translation using texts like newspaper articles. While I find it intellectually exciting, it simply does not work in a multilingual classroom where students speak many different first languages. The mainstream EFL style offers a better balance between knowledge delivery and language practice, though it still falls short when it comes to real-life application.

Communicative language teaching and task-based learning, on the other hand, focus on real-life language use, which aligns closely with the goals of the LINC program. We do not just practice asking for directions in a grocery store for the sake of it, we practice it so students can actually do it. That said, jumping straight into communication can be overwhelming for lower-level students. This is where audiolingual techniques like drills and structured dialogue provide a helpful and reassuring foundation before moving into more communicative activities.



In my experience, no single style works for every student or every situation. I typically begin with basic vocabulary and grammar structures, giving students enough examples and practice to feel confident, and then gradually introduce communicative techniques.

Alternative approaches like Dogme, community language teaching, and Suggestopedia also offer interesting possibilities. While they differ from my usual style, elements like conversation-based activities or even using music could be worth exploring with the right group.

At the end of the day, what matters most is staying flexible and keeping students' needs at the heart of every lesson!

UNTRANSLATABLE

KOMOREBI (NOUN)

/ko.mo.re.bi/ (Japanese)

The interplay of sunlight filtering through
the leaves of trees.



LEARNING BALLET IS MAKING ME A BETTER TEACHER

By Camila Andrade

5,6,7,8... *Plié! Dégage!* Oh, sorry... Wrong room? Maybe not quite. I recently joined an adult ballet class, and it has been helping me learn way more than just how to stretch my feet.

First: My body and my age are not barriers

Although we would agree that being in your 30s is still a young age, most professional dancers have retired by now. Naturally, ever since the first class, I have had to remind myself that my adult body is not simply a younger body that failed to keep up. I am just stronger in different ways.

The years of academic and professional experience moulded me into someone who can take feedback without crumbling. I can also filter an unhelpful comment and keep going. I can ask for something to be shown again without a flicker of shame. I do not feel the pressure of disappointing my parents if I fail in class, and nothing someone says about my flexibility or posture will ever break my heart the way leaving my home country did.

I think about this a lot in my EAL classes. So many adult learners experience self-consciousness, unfair comparisons with young children (who often learn English in the blink of an eye), and the sense that, because they are beginners in English, they are somehow beginners at everything.

They are not!

They are people with full lives, professional expertise, and wisdom, navigating a new skill. Now, more than ever, I make sure to acknowledge this in class every chance I get.



Second: Bring. It. On.

I cannot do a full class on pointe shoes (yet!). But I am now very convinced I am able to do hard things - even things that seem impossible at first. I also believe that a stumble is just *information*, and that I have done harder things in the past and survived them.

So I encourage my students to see that, sometimes, doing hard things is the price we pay for something worth so much to us. Hard things, in this scenario, often mean taking chances and making mistakes out loud, just like when I fall or make a wrong turn in front of the whole class.

Thinking like this also helps me, as a teacher, recognize that mistakes should not be dismissed to the point that they become invisible (and therefore never corrected or reflected on), but to a point where students can see them as mere datapoints instead of a reflection of their identities. So, class, repeat after me: I can do it! Mistakes are just information.

Third: Joy keeps you going!

I try to show up to the studio regardless of how my day looks. I practise the same *tendu* sequence I have practised twenty times before, and acknowledge all my teacher's corrections with respect. Very disciplined, I know.

However, discipline is not what keeps me going back to class. Neither are the cute leotards, nor how many calories are burned during this time.

Actually, it is something waaay simpler: I just genuinely enjoy it! The music, the movement, the happy moments when something clicks into place, and I feel like I am in a Barbie movie... Ahhh!!

I think I can safely say that holding space for joy and fun (even in adult classes) is crucial. Having a great time in class is a perfect invitation to come back tomorrow.

And I hope they always do!



*Member
Spotlight*

MAHA DWEIK



Hello, my name is Maha Dweik. A Palestinian born in Germany, I have lived most of my life in different countries, in Southwest Asia and Europe, before choosing to move to Canada over eight years ago.

I'm a curious person who loves exploring the world through new encounters, reading, and travelling. Intrigued by the world we live in, its history, and cultures, I love asking questions that help me learn about other people and their walks in life. I appreciate great sense of humour; actually, I think humour is a beautiful, and important, human quality, and is a great way to build bridges and to bring people closer together.

Particularly passionate about languages, I speak Arabic, French and English and have some fair knowledge of two others. I truly believe that one can learn a lot about other cultures, as well as about one's own, by learning a new language. After all, languages are the mysterious carriers and loyal narrators of our shared human culture, heritage and history which we all play a vital role in preserving as part of creating an inclusive world.

With educational background including a BA in Modern Languages from Yarmouk University in Jordan and an MBA from ESA Business School in Lebanon, I started my career with MAGMA as a Language Instructor, moving on to a community outreach role leading the organization's marketing and communications division and talented team. I rejoined the Language team as Head of Language School about a year ago. Through my current role, I am happy to lead and be part of a wonderful team of educators and admin members who all bring dedication and commitment to supporting newcomers everyday on their journey towards learning English and improving their communication skills as a key to opening doors to meaningful social and professional integration opportunities.

Learning is not restricted to that of other cultures. It is equally beautiful to learn about one's own. Recently, I decided to attend an Arabic Calligraphy class. It was fun and I got to learn some basic tips about Arabic Calligraphy - which is a fascinating art. The experience was a great reminder of how much there is to learn, always, even about one's own culture and native language.

I love meeting new people, cooking and gathering with friends around food; tables of good food is where best conversations take place. I enjoy walking and photography as well as reading. A perfect day for me is an early morning start with a cup of freshly brewed coffee enjoyed in quiet and in anticipation of what the new day will bring.



CELEBRATE THE LEARNING CONTEST

Share your English language learning journey with us and have a chance at winning \$100!

How can you express yourself?

- Creative writing
- Poetry
- Digital media
- Videos



4 different categories:

- Elementary (Grades 3-5)
- Middle (Grades 6-8)
- High School (Grades 9-12)
- Adults



Reward: \$100 Prize
(per category winner)



Deadline:
May 10th, 2026



Submit your entry online
at www.teslnb.ca

*For more information or questions,
please email teslnewbrunswick@gmail.com*

LETTER FROM A STUDENT

Dear Teachers,

I write to you as an English language student and a professional psychologist. Because I see the classroom from both sides, I have been thinking about something very important:

Years ago, I worked for a transportation company. Drivers had strict rules about rest periods. Everyone agreed that a tired driver was a safety risk. Rest was not a personal choice but a professional necessity. I think about that rule when I look at your work.

We often talk about teaching methods and school standards. We focus on how to help students improve. However, we rarely talk about the happiness and health of the person doing the teaching. We ask what teachers should know, but we rarely ask: How is the person who works so hard for our growth every day?

*As a psychologist, I know teaching is **emotionally and intellectually** demanding. You interact with us constantly and sometimes hold feelings of responsibility for our progress. This, of course, creates significant stress.*

For language teachers, the work is even deeper. You help us overcome fear and the anxiety of speaking a new language. Creating a safe space takes enormous energy. This is true for students who are migrants just like me. Language is more than just grammar. It is the ability to explain ourselves and reclaim our voice. You are the people who help us feel heard, the people who give us hope of finding a better job and fitting into the community.

*I would like to thank you and invite you to care for yourself, too. It is not a luxury. It is part of your job. Please pause and ask: “How am I feeling?” and remember, **the best thing you can do for us is to care for yourself first.***

Thanks again for all your hard work.

*With care,
Olena Derpoliuk*



Thank you for reading. We'll see you next time!



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.



TESL CANADA
Teachers of English as a Second Language - Canada

All TESL, TESL SK, TESL MB, TESL NB, TESL NS, and TEAL NL members are automatically TESL Canada members, and a portion of your provincial association membership fee (\$16/member) also gives you a TESL Canada membership.

In addition, please note that TESL Canada is the only national certification endorsed by these provincial affiliates. You can find out more about TESL Canada certification here.

For more information about TESL Canada conferences, publications, jobs and more, please check out the TESL Canada website at <https://www.tesl.ca>



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