

FALLING INTO RHYTHM

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



TESL NB Newsletter

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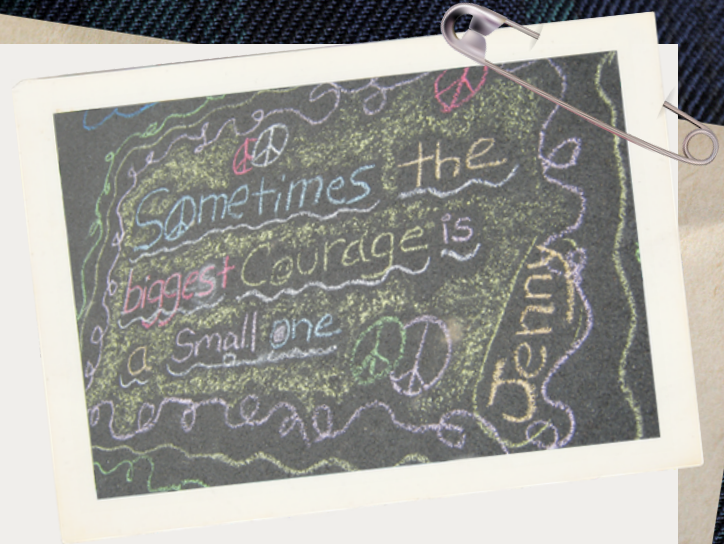
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PRESIDENT LETTER

Dear TESL NB members and community,

For many of us in education, the transition from August to September carries the feeling of a new beginning. Whether we work in K-12 schools, the settlement sector, private practice, university teaching, or elsewhere, the turn of the calendar can bring renewed energy and fresh intentions—even when our work has continued throughout the summer. As I write to you on the cusp of this new season, I hope you are feeling a sense of rejuvenation and anticipation for all that September may bring. I am looking forward to new connections, crisper days, crunchy apples, and maybe even a chunky sweater or two.

Many years ago, when I taught middle school, I started the school year with a small “Words to Live By” mini-unit. After exploring quotations and sayings about attitude, success, and meaning, I invited my students to bring in their favourite “words to live by” and decorate the ground leading into our school with them. I share a few of them here as potential inspiration for your September beginning, and perhaps for your classroom, too? I am envisioning multilingual quote walls, sayings and wisdom drawn from various cultures, and/or beautiful drawings that communicate meaning without words. If you decide to take this on, please take a picture and share it with us! We would love to learn from your students’ sharing.



Since we last connected through the May newsletter, your TESL NB Board has continued to be busy. We were delighted to welcome 12 wonderful new members to our organization over the summer, and welcome back 11 passionate returning members. We never take for granted that TESL NB exists because of, and for, its members and the beautiful profession we share. We are grateful for each of you and for all that you contribute to your classrooms, programs, workplaces, and communities across the province.

Our most visible accomplishment as a Board was, of course, **Teaching Together: Stories and Strategies**, the professional learning and networking event held in Miramichi on June 6, 2026. We were genuinely delighted to see so many TESL NB members give up a Saturday in June to join us. That generosity of time and spirit meant a great deal, and it contributed to a memorable day of learning, conversation, and connection. You can read more about the event in a report by TESL NB Co-Treasurer Dr. Paula Kristmanson on pages 8-9, and you will also find photographs capturing some of the day’s highlights.

On behalf of the Board, I am pleased to extend our sincere thanks once again to our event sponsors and supporters: the Province of New Brunswick, the Second Language Research Institute of Canada, and ScoreGuides, Inc. I would also like to specifically recognize our Event Committee Chair and TESL NB Vice-President, Mallory Cunningham, whose thoughtful leadership and exceptional coordination were central to the event's success, and the day's keynote speaker and TESL NB Board Member, Ali Abu Zeid, for both grounding us in the realities faced by many of our students, and inspiring individual and collective actions we can take to meet our students where they are and support them in ways that are most meaningful.

I am looking forward to an engaging fall as your TESL NB President. For example, with this newsletter, we are excited to be launching a new round of bursaries for members. As supporting opportunities for professional learning and networking is an important part of our mission, we value the opportunity to provide this kind of individualized support. You can find more information about this new round of bursaries on page 10 of this newsletter, and can also read reflections from Mania Azad on page 11 and Lindsay Carter on page 13, who share how their recent professional learning experiences were made possible through TESL NB bursary support.

Later in the fall, your Board will host the **TESL NB Annual General Meeting (AGM)**. We hope that you will join us, online on **November 26, 2026**, as we report on our first year as your leadership team.

As the leaves begin to change and the air grows cooler, I hope you will find a quiet moment, perhaps with a warm drink in hand, to truly enjoy this newsletter, thoughtfully curated for you by our wonderful newsletter editor, Camila Andrade. I think and hope you will find points of connection, validation, and inspiration in these pages.

Should you feel moved to contribute a story, teaching idea, recommendation, or something entirely new to a future issue, please reach out to Camila at camilapaccinidea@gmail.com to begin the conversation.

Wishing you a rich and rewarding fall season!

Yours in education,

Kathy



VICE PRESIDENT LETTER



Dear TESL NB Community,

We were so fortunate to come together as a community in June for our Spring Event in Miramichi, Teaching Together: Stories and Strategies. I left the event feeling inspired and reminded of the importance of making time to connect. I feel immense gratitude for everyone who shared their stories and strategies with us, as well as the volunteers, sponsors, and organizers who helped make the event such a success. Following our Spring Event, we moved quickly into the end of another school year. As a high school teacher, I always find this season a busy and bittersweet time as we celebrate our students' accomplishments while sending them off into the world.

This year was especially meaningful for me. One of the greatest privileges of my career has been watching some of my students grow from young newcomers in elementary school into high school graduates. This June, I watched a large group of my EAL students graduate. These students first walked into my classroom in 2016, and we have spent nearly ten years learning and growing together. It has been an incredible privilege to watch them learn English, overcome challenges, navigate barriers, develop new skills, and grow into remarkable, resilient young adults. I can't wait to see how they will change the world. I know they have certainly changed mine over the past decade.

As teachers, many of us think of September as our "New Year." For some, it will be their first day in a new school. For others, it will also mean a new country, a new culture, and a new language. EAL teachers wear many hats, and some days can feel like a whirlwind. I have found it helpful to begin each school year with a guiding intention—one for my classroom and one for my own well-being. This year, my classroom intention is to intentionally cultivate learning environments where multilingual learners feel welcomed, valued, and challenged. My personal wellness intention is to extend the same compassion and patience to myself that I strive to offer my students every day. As you prepare for another school year, I invite you to consider your own guiding intention.

I wish you a wonderful start to the school year and look forward to connecting with many of you throughout the months ahead.

Mallory



Teaching Strategies.mp4



Click here to watch our new
Share Your Strategy
series on YouTube.



Discover how **NB teachers** are **engaging** their learners!

HAVE STUDENTS PEER EDIT

Teaching Tip By Geoff North

When handing back written work to students, have them share it with a partner. Have them read, analyze, and comment on each other's work. The sharing of writing and the discussion involved in it are beneficial not only to students' speaking skills, but it can also help develop their autonomy when it comes to future writing assignments. By putting students together to read each other's writing, they will learn from their classmates.

For example, they might see a new word in their partner's essay and ask them what it means. The partner then teaches the word and uses their speaking skills to describe the meaning. Similarly, they might see different ways of writing (e.g. different ways to write a topic sentence, different ways to end an essay, etc.) by looking at what their classmates have produced. This, in turn, will help diversify their writing.

Peer editing can also be very motivating. When a peer gives constructive feedback or explains a favourite sentence, this will help with the partner's confidence and motivate them to keep going.

To help with this, there are a few considerations. First, avoid peer-editing in the beginning parts of the semester. Since students will be sharing each other's writing, a safe and comfortable learning environment must be established beforehand. Once students know each other and feel more comfortable, peer editing will then be easier and more meaningful.

Second, be mindful of which students you group together. Writing partners should change every time in order for students to see various styles of writing. There may be times when pairing students with similar writing proficiencies makes sense, while other times pairing students of different proficiencies can be beneficial (i.e. the more proficient writer can teach the less proficient writer).

TESL NB SPRING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING EVENT - TEACHING TOGETHER: STORIES AND STRATEGIES

Submitted by: Paula Kristmanson, co-treasurer and member of the TESL NB spring PL planning committee



TESL NB members on board the "Max Aitken" Miramichi River Boat sunset cruise.

This year's PL event was held for the first time in beautiful Miramichi on June 6th, 2026! On Friday evening prior to the Saturday sessions, TESL NB hosted a beautiful social-cultural cruise on the incredible Miramichi River. We learned about the history of the area with a focus on fun facts related to the river. For those who stayed overnight (or who already live in this lovely part of the province), we were treated to a gorgeous sunset!

Saturday was a day full of learning and reconnecting! We were treated to a poignant and emotional opening keynote from TESL NB and executive member, Ali Abu Zeid. Ali shared with us excerpts from his new book "The weight of my voice: A refugee's journey through silence, struggle, and strength" and connected these to relevant messages for EAL educators. This opening talk was followed by excellent concurrent sessions offered by TESL NB members Bryna Dickson, Lisa De Luca, Camila Andrade, Heath Currie, and Henrietta Obajemu.

The full day also involved time to chat and enjoy a catered lunch from Mind Full of Food as well as a session by Dr. Jill Cummings from ScoreGuides and a booth hosted by Kahli Braes from Readiverse. The day concluded with an inspirational closing talk by psychologist and MAGMA student, Olena Derpoliuk, entitled Protecting your Energy in a Helping Profession.

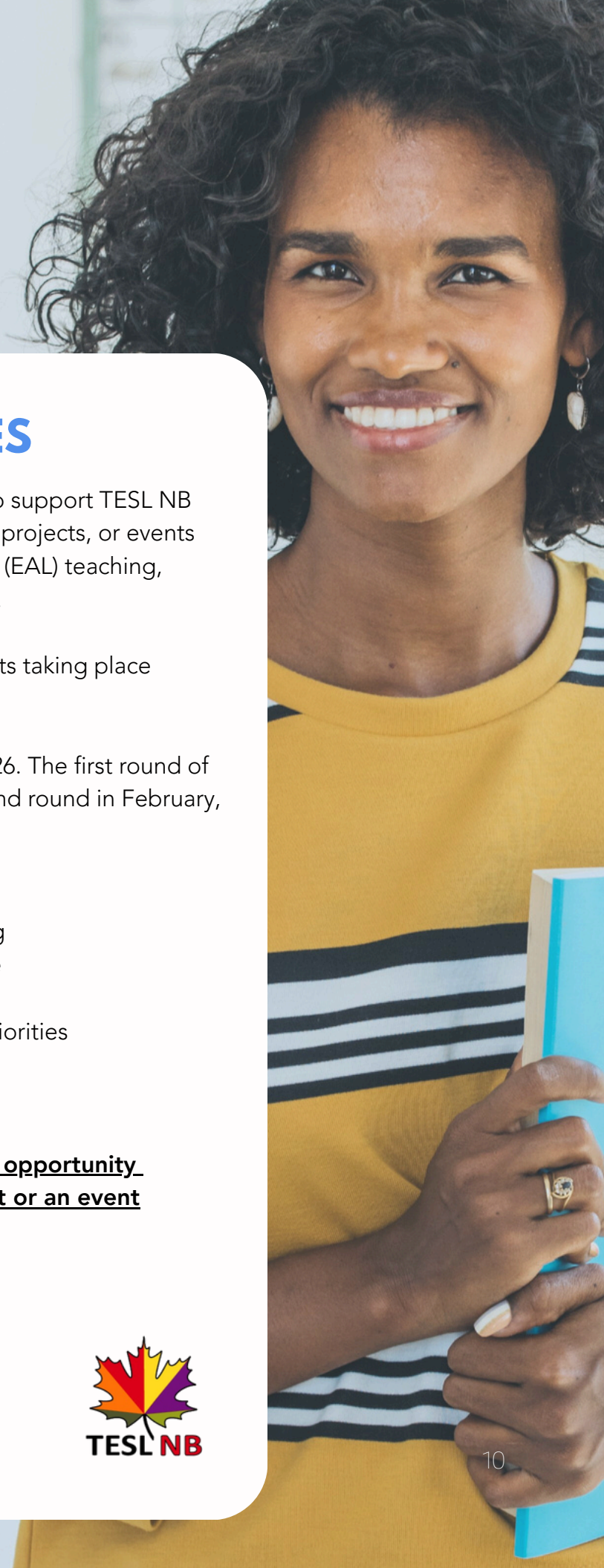
Heartfelt gratitude goes out to Mallory Cunningham, chair of the spring PL planning committee, and Whitney Beals, on-site coordinator. We are grateful to James M. Hill School for providing a terrific venue for this event. Huge thank you's go out to all the plenary speakers, workshop facilitators, resource presenters, and enthusiastic attendees who made this PL event a success. And a final shout out to our TESL NB executive and our fabulous leader, Kathy Whynot, for stepping up to the plate whenever asked!



TESL NB PL presenters and TESL NB members (Heath Currie, Lisa Deluca, first photo; Byna Dickson, second photo; Olena Derpoliuk and Camila Andrade, third photo) taking part in the 2026 edition of the TESL NB Spring Professional Learning Event.



TESL NB members, including a fine crew from Magma (first photo) and special guests (Dr. Jill Cummings, second photo), enjoying a day of learning and networking organized by our hardworking executive team (third photo).



BURSARY OPPORTUNITIES

TESL NB is once again pleased to offer bursaries to support TESL NB members with professional learning opportunities, projects, or events that strengthen English as an Additional Language (EAL) teaching, learning, and community impact in New Brunswick.

All TESL NB members are invited to apply for events taking place between September 2026 and June 2027.

Applications will be accepted until October 12, 2026. The first round of bursaries will be awarded in October and the second round in February, up to **\$500**.

Applicants must:

- Be current TESL NB members in good standing
- Submit their application by the stated deadline
- Demonstrate clear and measurable impact
- Show alignment with TESL NB's mission and priorities
- Provide a realistic and responsible budget

Click Here to Apply:

For a bursary to support a professional learning opportunity

For a bursary to support the hosting of a project or an event

For questions or more information, contact:
teslnewbrunswick@gmail.com



HOW THE TBEC PROGRAM CHANGED WHAT I THINK ABOUT TEACHING

By Mania Azad

When I first heard about the **Teaching Business English Certificate (TBEC)** program, I knew it was an opportunity I did not want to miss. As an ESL instructor at the Multicultural Association of Fredericton, I am always looking for ways to make my lessons more practical and relevant to my students' goals. Completing this 60-hour program, delivered by Score Guides Academy through TESL New Brunswick, has been one of the most valuable professional development experiences of my career.

The course explored workplace communication, learner-centred lesson planning, and strategies for helping adult learners build the language skills they need to succeed professionally. I especially valued learning how real workplace situations such as interviews, meetings, customer service, and Human Resources can become meaningful classroom activities. Many of my students are newcomers to Canada who bring valuable education and experience from their home countries and are working to rebuild their professional lives, so this direct connection to my teaching made the experience especially meaningful.

One of my biggest takeaways is that Business English is about far more than vocabulary or grammar. It is about helping learners communicate with confidence in real workplace situations, whether preparing for interviews, writing professional emails, or participating in meetings.

I am grateful to TESL New Brunswick and Score Guides Academy for this opportunity, to Mr. Shahram Ghanbari for encouraging my professional development, and to Ms. Golsa Saadi for her thoughtful guidance and constructive feedback throughout the course! Completing the TBEC program has strengthened my confidence and expanded my teaching toolkit, and I would highly recommend it to any Business English teacher.





**Change is not only
necessary to life, it is life.**

Alvin Toffler

ONCE A TEACHER, ALWAYS A STUDENT

By Lindsay Carter



A wise TESL professor once told me that teachers should try to be students as often as possible. When TESL NB advertised bursaries for a course at ScoresGuide Academy, I applied and was approved for **Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL)**. Although I teach adult literacy learners, I hoped some early learning strategies would transfer to my classroom, and I wanted to follow my professor's advice. The course proved genuinely valuable to my practice.

TEYL covers key theories, methods, and strategies for teaching children English as an additional language across five modules, featuring videos, discussion forums, quizzes, podcasts, and sample interview questions. Mini projects like lesson plans and teaching checklists let me apply the theories under Dr. Rozeta Biçaku's feedback. The concise format fit well alongside full-time teaching.

Many strategies for young learners translated surprisingly well to adult literacy education.

While age and developmental differences mean content must be adapted, core principles like phonics awareness and the use of visual support and realia matter for both groups. Gamification, emphasized for children, works just as well for adults; even with longer attention spans, a three-hour class in a new language is exhausting, and a game to change the pace helps refocus students.

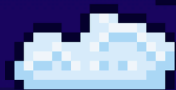
I also saw how important a low-pressure atmosphere is for learners of any age. The course notes that children produce language more freely when they feel safe experimenting without fear. Adults, often carrying burdens from daily life, need the same comfort, praise, and reassurance, plus a little humour, to make progress.

Though designed for children's instructors, TEYL offered real value for adult ESL teaching. My professor was right: once a teacher, always try to be a student.



HOW GAMIFICATION BUILDS CONFIDENT ENGLISH LEARNERS

By Silvia Ramos



As EAL teachers, we share a common goal: helping students feel confident using English in meaningful, authentic situations. One surprisingly effective tool is something students already love: games!

Gamification means intentionally using game-like elements- challenges, points, teamwork, competition, and immediate feedback- to boost motivation and engagement while still supporting clear learning objectives. A well-designed game is not a break from learning; it is part of it. Games create a low-pressure environment where students take risks, focusing on solving a problem or helping their team rather than perfect grammar. They communicate, make mistakes, and try again.

Games fit nearly any stage of a lesson. As a warmer, a quick vocabulary challenge activates prior knowledge. During the lesson, sentence-building races, information gap activities, role plays, and vocabulary bingo encourage communication without repetitive drills. As a closer, a quick competition consolidates learning and offers formative assessment. Often, a five-minute game reveals more about student understanding than a page of exercises.

Technology is not required. A board, some cards, and a little creativity can be enough. Digital tools can still add value: Wordwall, Kahoot!, and Quizizz for warm-ups and reviews; Quizlet and LearningApps for vocabulary; Baamboozle and Wheel of Names for speaking practice; and Blooket or Gimkit for exit tickets.

Gamification works well beyond childhood too. Adults may enjoy workplace communication challenges, while teenagers respond to escape rooms or competitive quizzes. Across all ages, the real benefit is not the competition itself but the confidence it builds, shifting the focus from "What if I make a mistake?" to "Can we solve this together?".



CELEBRATE THE LEARNING CONTEST

By Geoff North

TESL NB would like to thank everyone who submitted entries to this year's Celebrate the Learning contest. English language learners from around the province were invited to share their language learning journeys through various forms of media. All participants did an amazing job.

In the Adult Learner Category, the first-place prize went to Olena Umanets (Moncton), with an Honourable Mention going to Imane Fachar (Moncton). Excellent entries that both conveyed the English language learning experience with great detail and insight.

In the Middle Level Learner Category, first place was awarded to Borys Moiseiev-Lozhnikov (Moncton). Great piece of writing. Thank you for sharing your journey!

In the Elementary Learner Category, first place went to Mia Yzabelle Reano Guinez (Saint John) and Nikol Nahorniuk (Saint John). This duo teamed up to submit a video in which they interviewed each other about their experience learning English. Excellent submission. Very creative!

Thank you again to all participants and congratulations to this year's winners!



Winners from this year's Celebrate the Learning contest. Pictured from left: Kathy Whynot (TESL NB President), Mia Yzabelle Reano Guinez (Elementary Learner winner), Olena Umanets (Adult Learner winner), Imane Fachar (Adult Learner honourable mention), Geoff North (TESL NB Social Media Representative). Missing from photo: Nikol Nahorniuk (Elementary Learner winner), Borys Moiseiev-Lozhnikov (Middle Level winner).

Member Spotlight



ELISSA MITTON

Everyone, meet Elissa! She is an ASD-N Subject Coordinator for EAL and the Welcome Centre, who is thrilled to be heading into her third year in the role.



Newcomer enrolment at this scale is still fairly new for the region, so she gets to grow and adapt right alongside the district, which is part of what makes the work so exciting to her.

Elissa is an East Coaster through and through. Born in Moncton and raised in Dieppe, she found her way to the Miramichi River in Grade 8. After graduation, life took her on quite the adventure, through Halifax, Fredericton, Seoul, and all over Southeast Asia and South America, before eventually bringing her full circle back home!

She loves to talk about how living internationally was humbling and eye-opening, and she still lights up describing the food in Korea, the ease of public transportation, and the deep respect for education she found there. But those years abroad also gave her a soft spot for home, for a place where people hold the door for the person behind them, and neighbours show up with a meal when someone is having a hard week. That mix of curiosity and homesickness is something she now brings straight into her work with newcomer families.

Language has been a thread through her whole life, starting with French immersion in Grade 6 and a six-month exchange in Quebec that she still talks about fondly. She went on to teach EAL in South Korea for five years, earned her Bachelor of Education and a TESOL certificate at UNB, and later completed a Master of Education in Curriculum Development and Assessment. Before stepping into her current role, she spent eight years teaching French as a Second Language within ASD-N, squeezing in evening EAL classes on the side because, as she puts it, she has never been great at sitting still.

She puts children at the heart of everything she does and brings a lot of energy, humour, and heart along with it. Outside of work, her favourite title is mom to her young daughter, who keeps every day joyful and busy. Camping, time near the water, and adventures with the family dog in tow are how she likes to spend her downtime, along with trying new food wherever her travels take her next!



JOIN US AT OUR 2026 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Thursday,
November 26th at 7:00 pm



Call for nominations!

Have you ever thought about
joining our amazing team?

Open board Positions:

- Member-at-Large
- Member-at-Large

If you would like to put your name forward or if you simply
want to learn more, contact Erica at ethomas@unb.ca.

LETTER FROM A STUDENT

Dear Teachers,

I write to you as an English language student, but above all as a newcomer who has learned that language learning is about far more than vocabulary and grammar. When you walk into your classroom, you see students of different ages, cultures, and English proficiency levels. But behind every student is a story. Some have left their home country to build a better future for their families. Others have left behind successful careers, loved ones, and a life they spent years building. Some were forced to flee war or insecurity. Each student carries their own journey, their own challenges, and the dream of building a new life.

Learning a new language as an adult is not easy. At the same time, we are adapting to a new culture, learning how society works here, searching for employment, and trying to regain our confidence. For many French-speaking newcomers, the language barrier becomes one of the biggest obstacles to integration. Some eventually leave the province because they struggle to build a future here. Others choose to stay and persevere.

You may think you are teaching grammar or pronunciation. In reality, you restore confidence in people who have begun to doubt themselves. You encourage us to speak even when we fear making mistakes. You give us the courage to attend a job interview, speak with our children's teachers, or simply find our place in our new community. Behind every accent is a journey. Behind every hesitation to speak is often an act of courage. We never forget the people who helped us overcome the language barrier.

Thank you for your patience, your kindness, and your belief in us.
You are helping us find our voice and discover that we truly belong.

*With heartfelt gratitude,
Imane Fachar*



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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