



## President's farewell message

**G**reetings on behalf of your executive! This is a busy time of year for so many of us. Some of us are wrapping up the end of the school year while others are just starting up again. TESL Toronto is also doing both. At our June meeting we reviewed the Spring conference and then immediately set a date to meet in July and prepare for the Fall conference.

In the past 12 months, we celebrated 30 years of service

and continued to focus our energy on one of our primary mandates - providing professional development to our members. We were pleased to offer two highly successful conferences, run our first round of conference bursary awards to support attendance at conferences and sponsor a plenary speaker for the annual TESL Ontario conference. We have also continued to build our professional community through the TESL Toronto Newsletter and website. The newsletter has featured arti-

cles and reviews from many of our members and we celebrated ESL Week in Ontario in 2007 by sponsoring a writing contest that drew personal essays and poetry from both instructors and students.

At this year's Annual General Meeting, we welcomed a new affiliate President, Karen Thomson and said goodbye to executive board member Saskia Stille. Saskia joined the executive in 2001 and has spearheaded and supported a number of initiatives during her time with us. We tried our best to keep her, but she gave birth to twins last year and we just couldn't compete!

On a personal note, my two years as your president have been rewarding both personally and professionally. As your outgoing President, I thank you, the members, for the energy and excitement you bring to all the affiliate events and activities and I thank the executive for their enormous dedication and support. On behalf of the TESL Toronto executive, we wish you all a great summer!

*Antonella Valeo*

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### Upcoming ESL Conferences:

TESL Ontario Fall Conference  
Nov. 22 - 24 Toronto

"Making Connections"  
[www.teslontario.org](http://www.teslontario.org)



### Errata

We thank Marie Hori for corrections to the names of two of our previous presidents - Banny Hynes (1986) and Phyllis Amber (1989). Their names were misspelled in our last issue.

The professional affiliation of Rob McConkey, one of the winners in our ESL writing contest was incorrectly identified in our last issue. Mr. McConkey's affiliation is with the English Language Institute of Seneca College.

## IN HER GARDEN: Q&A with Fran Marshall



*Durham region ESL student Qurat ul Ain was so taken by Fran's book *The Life and Times of Lillian* that she painted this scene from one of the stories and presented it as a gift to the author. Her teacher is Alice Chase.*

**Q.** Fran, how did your career in ESL begin?

**A.** In the early '70s, as a stay-at-home mother and former teacher, I was offered a job teaching ESL two evenings a week and then two afternoons as well. I thought it would be an interim job until I could return to my much-loved career as a Language Arts teacher.

However, after the first few sessions, I was completely captivated. I had found my calling, my vocation, my place in the sun! As time went on, I increased my part-time hours, but never reached full-time because of my daughter's serious illness.

In the early '90s, my supervisor, Peggy Frederikse, asked me to be a part-time resource consultant for Etobicoke

ESL. This was a fantastic opportunity for me, and even though I missed having my very own classes, I enjoyed the challenge of doing demonstration lessons in every level and in every skill. My amazing colleagues were always welcoming and supportive.

It was at that time that I was encouraged to present workshops at conferences and P.D. events. I will be forever grateful to Peggy who had a lot of confidence in me, and to the workshop participants who have shown enthusiasm for my ideas and materials. I am very appreciative of the fact that I have been able to continue presenting and working with teachers in my (failed) retirement. Frankly, there is nothing I would rather be doing!

**Q.** Do you remember your very first year teaching ESL?

**A.** Yes, I remember it well. I had a diverse group of about 30 Basic Level students. I was inspired and motivated by their commitment to learning, their joy in making progress, their keen desire for success, and their vocal appreciation of my lessons, even though I knew that I still had much to learn. One of my greatest realizations that year was the fact that my learners' differences made each one unique, but their similarities united them in common purpose. The class soon became a cohesive community.

There were few ESL resources available at that time, so it seemed quite natural to create my own material for the lessons. I loved the challenge of finding creative

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## Q&A with Fran Marshall

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ways to meet the varied needs of my class.

**Q.** What do you think are the most important qualities for being an effective ESL teacher?

**A.** To be well-prepared with a good lesson plan for each session. That's number one on my list. If you do that, the lesson flows smoothly and the positive response from your learners is a tangible reward. Flexibility is also necessary because there are many times when you need to address current situations, answer students' questions and give explanations that can't wait for another time. And I confess that I've often used spontaneous stories – for example, something happened that reminded me of a past event - and a story lesson evolved out of that!

Good time management would be number two on my list. We need to manage time wisely so that every student acquires practical language in every lesson. That is why I have always liked to use three-segment lesson plans, with review openers, multi-skill unit stories, and challenging but fun closing activities.

The qualities that I see and admire in many ESL teachers are a generosity of spirit, a love and knowledge of language, a well-developed sense of humour, a flair for drama and creativity, and of course, a passion for their calling!

I also feel it's important to be a model of good citizenship because we represent Canada; our learners often emulate our attitudes and behaviour.

**Q.** How did you get the idea to start developing and publishing your own ESL materials?

**A.** From my learners and my colleagues. Their positive responses to my

### Teachers write to Fran:

Dear Fran,

“The Life and Times of Lillian” often acts as a springboard for discussion of my students' own experiences with immigration. (Most students think Lillian's father must have been very desperate indeed to leave his children in an orphanage. They also believe that Sol would have come back for the children if something terrible had not happened to him.) Discussing Lillian's story often leads to students writing their own stories of how they came to Canada and what life has been like for them. Finally, after all 16 parts are completed, we have a celebration in honour of Lillian and her daughter, Fran Marshall, who gave us the story.”

— Alice Chase, Durham LINC

“The Early Bird Special” gave me enough openers for an entire term. My class really liked the activities and they not only reviewed, they learned a lot.”

“People who had often come late to class started coming on time because there was an opener on the board.”

efforts, my personal stories and activities, inspired me to share them with other ESL teachers and classes.

**Q.** What have been the biggest challenges in being an ESL publisher?

**A.** I wanted a format for my reader-workbooks that teachers would find user-friendly and involve the four skills in self-contained unit lessons. My aim was to provide reading materials and thought-provoking opening and closing activities that would appeal to learners and cut down on teacher preparation time.

I also had to decide whether my books would be reproducible for class use. I followed Thane Ladner's lead from *Canadian Resources for ESL* in that aspect, and I have had no regrets. My publishing

efforts have been very fulfilling because I hear from ESL classes across Canada.

**Q.** So you get feedback from teachers and learners?

**A.** Yes. Their letters astonish and quite overwhelm me. When I started writing ESL books I had no idea they would be used anywhere other than in my own local area.

**Q.** Where have you travelled and done workshops as an ESL leader?

**A.** I have been fortunate to travel across Canada, from Victoria to Halifax, and to present at countless TESL Canada conferences. In Ontario, I've presented at most of the TESL affiliates (several times at some of them!) and at TESL

(Continued on page 4)

## Q&A with Fran Marshall



### Fran Marshall at a Glance

- Language Arts teacher - Etobicoke
- Teacher and consultant for CBC radio and TV
- Adult ESL instructor, basic to advanced levels, TOEFL, citizenship, writing
- Resource consultant, workshop presenter, author, keynote speaker
- Founder/editor of *Impact* – Etobicoke adult ESL newsletter
- Author of: *Thirty Minutes to Review*, *ESL Stories – the Life and Times of Lillian*, *The Early Bird Special*, *The Story of David*, *ESL According to Fran*, *A Little Bit of Everything*

Ordering Information: <http://www3.sympatico.ca/ross.marshall1>

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Ontario each November. I've also worked with teachers who work at private ESL centres and even teachers from other countries who are taking training here. Another bonus in my ESL life is making class visits to centres where they have used my personal family stories. The good times never end!

**Q.** Outside of ESL, what things interest you?

**A.** I will have to admit that both literally and figuratively I'm not a well-rounded person! My husband Ross and I take part in a great movie discussion group about every six weeks. I also do various kinds of writing; I often create poetry for special occasions. I solve cryptic cross-words in order to ward off senility. I am

not into fitness - a competitive game of *Scrabble* is my kind of exercise, and I'm not a good loser! I also enjoy being with my two grandchildren, taking part in animated discussions, eating in restaurants, and reading good books.

**Q.** Are you working on any new projects right now?

**A.** Yes, I have several things on the go. Thane Ladner and I have just started working together on a project with a CLB focus. I plan to write another reader-workbook, and I intend to include a section on motivation in my workshops.

My career still provides excitement, challenge, and fulfillment.

**Q.** Who have been special in your ESL career?

**A.** I have special debts of gratitude to lots of people, but if I had to single out a few, I would say Thane Ladner from *Canadian Resources for ESL* and Monika Jankowska-Pacyna from *AlphaPlus* for their valuable advice and marketing expertise.

I am also grateful to Peggy Frederikse, Barbara Steen who persuaded me to present my very first workshop, to my friend Mary Hall for her computer expertise, to TESL Ontario affiliate directors and conference organizers, to Jean Hamilton and Renate Tilson and finally to my family - Ross, Andrea, Richard, Bradley and Kimberly. ♦

## TESL Toronto Executive Board

### TESL Toronto Executive Board

- President:** Karen Thomson  
**Past President:** Antonella Valeo  
**President-elect:** open  
**Treasurer:** Cheryl Richman  
**Affiliate Director:** Joanne Hincks  
**Membership Secretary:** Anne Cairns  
**Recording Secretary:** Dale Northcote  
**Newsletter Editor:** Clayton Graves  
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**Website Officer:** Bruce Russell  
**Members at Large:** Margaret MacLeod, Martha Staigys, Akua Joseph, Anne MacGregor-O'Neill, Ken Lackman, Patricia Glogowski



*Left to right (first row): Marina Marcan, Antonella Valeo, Ken Lackman, Akua Joseph, Anne Cairns, Anne MacGregor-O'Neill, Clayton Graves. Second row: Margaret MacLeod, Cheryl Richman, Bruce Russell, Karen Thomson, Martha Staigys, Dale Northcote, Patricia Glogowski*



**WHAT:** TESL Toronto Fall Conference  
**WHERE:** New College, University of Toronto  
**WHEN:** Saturday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2007

- HIGHLIGHTS:**
- Expert ESL Guest Speaker
  - Choice of Workshop Sessions
  - Lunch
  - Publishers
  - FREE draws for new multi-media Materials

Watch for details coming in September Newsletter. Register early.

## Spring 2007 Conference Session Report

# Falling in Love with English

Presenters: Channah Cohen, with Melanie Watt and Lei Wang

Reviewer: Anne MacGregor-O'Neill



*Channah Cohen, flanked by Woodgreen volunteer Lei Wang (left) and Melanie Watt (right).*

**H**ow does one move beyond the grammar exercises and the prescribed dialogues of the ESL workbooks? How does one resist the need to translate every new word? How does one make peace with their old language and embrace a new language and a new life? How does one “*Fall in Love with English?*”

Channah Cohen, Settlement Worker at Woodgreen Immigrant Services posed these questions to the participants of her workshop “Falling in Love with English” at the spring TESL Toronto Conference. She asks our learners to love English as if it were their very own child. How can we as ESL instructors, facilitate this love affair? Presenting with her were Melanie Watt, a LINC

Instructor at Woodgreen and Lei Wang a newcomer to Canada.

Channah Cohen has taught ESL and Communications Skills at George Brown College and has studied, worked and taught in theatre. She demonstrated through some visualizing exercises that the skills and techniques required of a good actor are easily transferred to the world of language acquisition. To promote language proficiency Channah Cohen has organized and facilitated a number of spelling and poetry competitions at Woodgreen.

Melanie Watt, gave us a general overview of how to set up a spelling competition. She touched on preparation, rules, obtaining spelling lists and the role of the adjudicator. After walking

us through a mock spelling bee and making a few of our own spelling mistakes, we had a better understanding of the process.

After Channah explained the practical details of running a poetry competition, Lei Wang recited *Fire-Flowers* by Pauline Johnson. As a competitor participating in the competition, you are asked to prepare an introduction of the poem you selected. The introduction should include the reasons for choosing the poem, what the main idea of the poem is, and what you learned through your work on the poem. We were all very moved by her depth of understanding and her recitation of the poem. We were reminded of the immense struggle that a new language learner faces and the obstacles that they must overcome. And like the last line of the poem, “And life revives, and blossoms once again” she too expressed her sense of hope for a better future ahead.

In Channah Cohen’s welcome to the competitors of the Spelling Competition she says, “I hope this Spelling Competition will open up possibilities for you to fall in love with English. To think, to breathe English as you think and breathe that older, more familiar language. Because it really is your language now.” This workshop presented us with some promising ways to enhance this love affair with English and now the rest is up to us. Thank you. ♦

## Spring 2007 Conference Session Report

# Falling in Love with English



## Fire-flowers

And only where the forest fires have sped,  
     Scorching relentlessly the cool north lands,  
 A sweet wild flower lifts its purple head,  
 And, like some gentle spirit sorrow-fed,  
     It hides the scars with almost human hands.

And only to the heart that knows of grief,  
     Of desolating fire, of human pain,  
 There comes some purifying sweet belief,  
 Some fellow-feeling beautiful, if brief.  
     And life revives, and blossoms once again.

— E. Pauline Johnson



*E. Pauline Johnson (1861-1913) was born on the Six Nations Iroquois Reserve in Ontario, the daughter of a Mohawk chief and his English wife. Miss Johnson became a popular entertainer and poet who toured widely, giving theatrical performances.*

## Internet Sites about Spelling Bees

1. A good website about **how to organize** a spelling bee: [www.canada.com/national/features/canspell/howtohost.html](http://www.canada.com/national/features/canspell/howtohost.html). This site explains how the CanSpell National Spelling Bee is organized.
2. A good website about **word lists** for spelling bees: [www.spellingbee.com](http://www.spellingbee.com). Follow the links to the *Study Resources* section. There you'll find three useful resources recommended by the organizers of the annual Scripps Spelling Bee in the U.S.

## Internet sites about Memorizing Poetry

1. This website explores the value of memorizing poems, lists some suitable shorter poems to start with and some longer poems for more experienced students, and provides tips on how to read, memorize, analyze and understand poetry, in the section "Related Articles". [www.articles.poetry.com/64/](http://www.articles.poetry.com/64/)
2. This website is from *About.com*. It lists and explains 14 steps and tips for memorizing poems. <http://poetry.about.com/cs/textarchives/ht/howmemorizepoem.htm>

## Spring 2007 Conference Session Report

# Warm-Ups and Icebreakers for LINC Levels 1-3

**Presenter:** Andrea Mesa

**Reviewer:** Rosabelle Boateng

**B**eginning teachers are always looking for new ideas to help their Level 1-3 students acquire language. This workshop session was aimed at teachers in the early stages of their professional career. The presenter, Andrea Mesa, provided a wealth of ideas for warm-ups and icebreakers that are guaranteed to activate students, keep them engaged and – in some cases – even awake. (Many of us have students who are working at one or two jobs, taking care of family responsibilities, and trying to learn English at the same time, so we know about the drowsy learner.)

With a handout package running to 60 pages, Andrea sent us all away with dozens of language activities for Benchmark levels 1-3 arranged by theme and including activity sheets, learning outcomes and a list of resources.

This workshop was active – from the outset we were up out of our seats, sometimes forming pairs, then working alone, later gathering into small groups. Andrea began her activities with a sure hit – music – and before long we were dancing, clapping and having fun. The session was a terrific example of just how an active, communicative classroom should work.

As a retired teacher, but still engaged in ESL tutoring, I felt I was in the presence of a real professional. Andrea Mesa is enthusiastic, passionate, personable, and well organized.

Why is it important to have active and engaged students? Andrea began with a

list of goals for an activity-based approach:

### Goals for an Active Language Learning Classroom:

- To motivate.
- To integrate language skills.
- To create awareness of special uses of language in different communication situations.
- To expand learning objectives beyond the curriculum outline.
- To relieve tension and stress.
- To build strong learning relationships through teams and group work.
- To increase self-esteem within the group.
- To open the door to learners' creativity.
- To eliminate monotony from the classroom.
- To awaken sleepy learners.

What are the benefits of incorporating warm-ups and icebreaker activities into our lesson plans? Andrea explained some of them:

- Fun and humour are essential in life as well as in an ESL classroom.
- Interaction and group participation engage learners and make information more memorable and relevant to their lives outside the school.
- Activity prompts students to react spontaneously when they work in teams or groups; they must cooper-

ate and converse in English – the ultimate goal.

How does an effective teacher make an activity-based approach work?

1. Always prepare a lesson plan.
2. Use and re-use the same topics. Andrea uses and adapts 12 of the common themes for Benchmark levels 1-3. These include *Housing, Banking, Canada, Family and Relationships, Health and Safety, and Telephone*.
3. Keep instructional and explanatory talk to a minimum so that learner talk can be at the maximum.
4. Always practice the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing.

### Question and Answer Activities

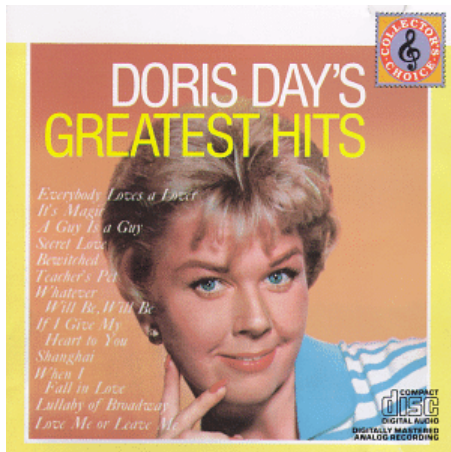
Among Andrea's warm-up exercises, we used question and answer activities such as "Find someone Who..." or "Are You the One?" Both activities are good for communicatively practising the present tense. Andrea adapted them from the book *Fun With Grammar* by Suzanne W. Woodward, published by Pearson Longman. It was so enjoyable to get out of our seats, circulate in the room as we sought answers to the Activity Questions, and at the same time meet new people. It's the same with our students.

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## Spring 2007 Conference Session Report

# Warm-Ups and Icebreakers for LINC Levels 1,2,3



Popular with ESL classes, the song “*Que Sera, Sera*”, by Doris Day, is probably her best-known and most popular tune. She recorded it reluctantly for a film directed by Alfred Hitchcock, *The Man Who Knew too Much*. The recording was done in one take, and Miss Day apparently said, “That’s the last time you’ll ever hear that song.”

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### Using Songs in the Classroom

Music and songs are also useful materials for warm-ups and icebreakers. Two of the most popular are *Que sera, sera* and *Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer*.

For the first song, Andrea handed out an envelope with pictures of the singer Doris Day on the outside and the song lyrics cut into strips inside. (By the way, you can find great pictures for instructional use by going to Google. Be sure to click on *images*. And you can find the lyrics for thousands of songs by going to [www.lyrics.com](http://www.lyrics.com)).

We then shared activity ideas using these simple materials. For example, students can look at the pictures of Doris Day and talk about the singer – describe her clothes, guess some things about her personality, and so on.

We then listened to a recording of *Que sera, sera*, and arranged the lyric strips in the correct order as we heard them. We ended up with a complete text of the lyrics. With the music as an aid, we then sang *Que sera, sera*. It’s a simple song, with lots of repetition, so it’s easy to memorize.

But the song lyrics also provide practice material for grammar (past and future tenses: “When I was just a little girl, I asked my mother... and Will I be pretty, will I be rich? Here’s what she said to me...”). The result is that students can practice the four language skills from one authentic and easily found learning resource.

Another activity that teachers can derive from *Que sera, sera* is discussion about the family. You can explore relationships between parents and children, for example, and share ideas about how to answer your children’s questions about life. That helps to tie school experience to home experience. And it gives adult students the language they need to talk about intimate family issues in English with their kids.

Andrea stressed that when you use songs, you should tell the students in advance what they are doing and why. Some students have not been accus-

tomed to using resources from popular culture for ‘serious’ learning. They need to know the value in language learning from such non-traditional resources. So, tell them – and demonstrate the payoff in their language.

### Classroom Reference Charts

Level 1,2,3 students need accessible references for vocabulary, spelling and grammar. One way to provide those references is by creating word banks or vocabulary lists on wall charts. And there’s no reason why the students shouldn’t be creating, contributing to, and updating these instant resources themselves. As they correct each other’s spelling and argue about which new words to add, they are using language for learning.

For the Rudolph song, your classroom activities can be expanded to include a holiday or Christmas theme, decorations for special times in the year – not just Christmas, a potluck meal and discussion about the practice of gift-giving in different cultures around the world: when? what? why? meaning? cost?

### Puzzles and Games, Stories and Drama

Andrea then presented other ideas for warm-ups and icebreakers including the use of thematic crossword puzzles, e.g. *Vegetables and Fruit*, from the book, *Crossword Puzzles for Beginners* by

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## Spring 2007 Conference Session Report

# Warm-Ups and Icebreakers for LINC Levels 1,2,3

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Anthony Mollica, and games e.g. Simon Says, and Tic-Tac-Toe. These activities review vocabulary, encourage both co-operation and competition, prompt spontaneous language, and deepen relationships within the class.

Listening to funny stories, playing action games and acting out dramatic scenes, memory exercises, and activities using pictures are also good for sparking language at the beginning of a class. One funny activity was called "Taking A Group Photograph." Using a drawing of people in different positions, the photographer (one person) arranges the people in a group so they look like the drawing.

Andrea offered a word of practical advice for this activity: "No touching", to avoid inappropriate body contact, a definite no-no in many cultures. She uses strings to facilitate the right poses.

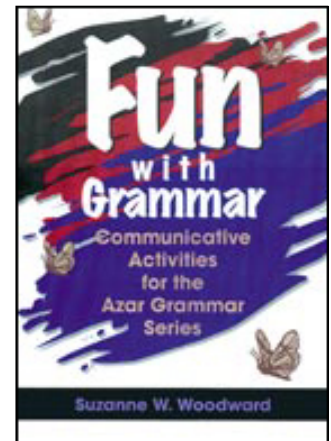
"Don't forget that with lower level learners, books originally written for children are also useful tools," she advised, noting that the *Waldo* Books are particularly good.

Andrea made her session fun and active and the time went too quickly. She is a dynamic teacher and full of ideas. All who attended this presentation have materials and ideas to use and share for a long time. If you have an opportunity to take Andrea Mesa's workshop don't miss it. ♦

Andrea Mesa is a Program Officer with the Toronto District School Board.

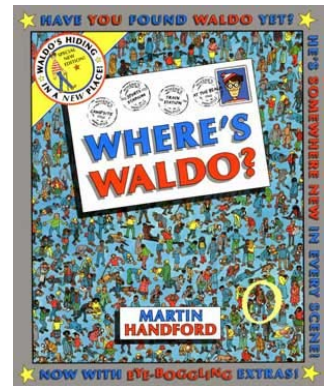
*Fun with Grammar: Communicative Activities for the Azar Grammar Series*, by Suzanne W. Woodward.  
Pearson Longman.

More than 200 communicative, task-based games and activities. Each chapter has four-skill activities and full-page reproducible worksheets.



*Where's Waldo?* by Martin Handford.  
Candlewick Press.

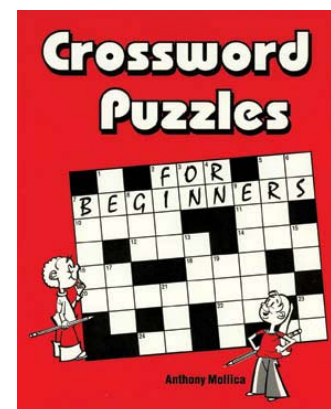
The *Waldo* series now numbers at least 20 books. For ESL learners, finding Waldo in the two-page picture spread is a challenge. He's a funny-looking cartoon fellow who appears amid busy scenes, filled with other characters and objects. The *Waldo* books prompt discussion, vocabulary learning, and they're fun.



*Crossword Puzzles for Beginners* by Anthony Mollica.

Alta Book Centre Materials for Teaching and Learning English: 1988

Contact: [info@altaesl.com](mailto:info@altaesl.com)



## Spring 2007 Conference Session Report

# Ready to Teach! Teacher's Toolkit for Instructors on the Go!

Presenters: Gloria McPherson, Professor, English Language Institute, Seneca College, and Pauline Hussey, ESL and LINC Instructor

Reviewer: Anne Fitterer



Hussey, an ESL- LINC instructor and graduate from Seneca College, developed this practical solution to mobile teaching with the support of her colleague Gloria McPherson, a Professor at Seneca's English Language Institute.

During the session, both shared their insights and experiences about the life of the itinerant teacher. To make the session absolutely practical, they had brought in an actual wheeled cart, samples of portable filing boxes and detailed lists of materials an instructor could and should carry.

"If you show up to the job with a portable kit like this," said Hussey, "interviewers will immediately be impressed with your organized approach to teaching. And," she continued, "always carry the essentials, right down to your own chalk, felt-pen markers and board erasers. In that way you won't have to depend on anyone else at the teaching site to lend theirs to you." In other words, what they will see at the site is a teacher ready to go.

**A**n air of anticipation filled the room as the workshop, Ready to Teach!, began. Aimed at both new and seasoned instructors, this session was a goldmine of practical information for teachers who are on the go — those of us who move from one teaching site to another.

By the end of the 90-minute session, we had dozens of practical tips and suggestions about creating, storing and trans-

porting a day's or even a week's learning materials — including lesson plans and activities — in an organized and portable filing container. In other words, we walked away with the blueprint for a portable Teacher's Toolkit.

The workshop was especially useful for instructors on supply teacher lists and those who teach in multi-site locations and with different organizations. Pauline

From her own experience, Hussey has found that when supply instructors come to a new teaching site, administrators want the least amount of hassle. What they are looking for is a seamless continuation of the teaching process.

"Besides," she continued, "your careful attention to detail and your sense of

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## Spring 2007 Conference Session Report

# Ready to Teach! Teacher's Toolkit for Instructors on the Go!



Good resources to stock in your Teacher's kit include *Canada's Food Guide*, *Everybody Loves Raymond* DVDs, and copies of TTC maps.

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organization gives them clear evidence of a professional approach. That's an impression you should really try to leave when you go."

To be practical, says Hussey, start with the Tool Kit itself. You can easily find various sizes of filing containers and wheeled carts in the \$20 to \$40 range from such outlets as Staples, Business Depot, Canadian Tire, Wal-Mart and Zellers. Try them out for portability, quality of wheels, number and size of drawers or sections, handles, and so on.

Each workshop attendee received a detailed hand-out package with lists of what such a portable teaching kit could contain, organized under such basic headings as: Supplies, Essentials and Folders. Folders should be clearly labelled: *lesson plans, pictures, activities,*

*grammar, listening, speaking, reading, writing, calendar/maps, paper/overheads, etc.*

Recommended essentials also include a picture dictionary, verb and picture cards, lesson plan templates, blank calendars and outline maps. Add to that such sample *realia* as shopping mall maps, TTC maps, menus, flyers, etc.

Additional supplies should include: white and coloured paper and index cards, stapler, pens and pencils, Ziploc bags, dice, magnets and paper clips.

"Every teacher will naturally want to personalize their own teaching kit," said Hussey, "so include things that work for you."

Hussey and McPherson also included a useful list of recommended audio-visual resources, web sites and texts.

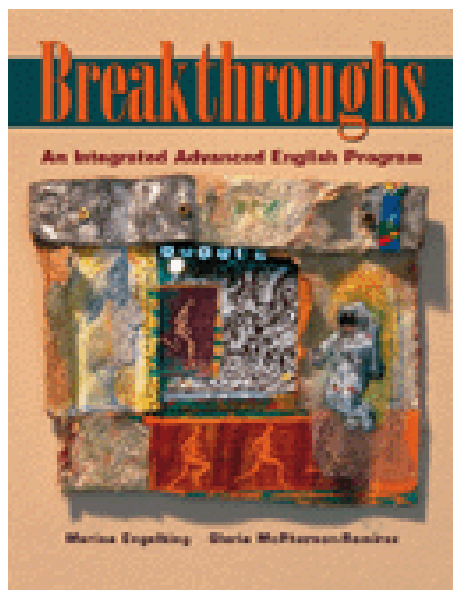
The Resources List included internet sites for LINC curriculum guidelines, web sites to download copyright-free excerpts and texts of books, readings with questions and vocabulary, songs and lyrics, free government publications, such as *Canada's Food Guide* and guides for physical activities. Hussey even recommended the DVDs: *Everybody Loves Raymond* as a good resource for listening comprehension activities.

Other favourites on their list included the sound track of Disney's *The Lion King: The Circle of Life*, and music from Elton John, Simon & Garfunkel and the Beatles.

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## Spring 2007 Conference Session Report

# Ready to Teach! Teacher's Toolkit for Instructors on the Go!



*Breakthroughs: An Integrated Advanced English Program* by Marina Engelking and Gloria McPherson-Ramirez. Toronto: Oxford University Press. *Breakthroughs* is a theme-based ESL program for young adults and adults at the advanced level. This communicative, integrated-skills program develops skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

(Continued from page 12)

She advised us: "Try to collect songs that tell a story. They're often more useful than simple love songs."

McPherson and Hussey then introduced several topics for lessons, including ideas for using newspapers in the classroom. Workshop participants formed groups and, with samples of newspapers in hand, dove into a range of language activities suited for beginner, intermediate and advanced students. The leaders

then suggested a myriad of creative ideas and ways of integrating pictures into a curriculum.

Pictures should be a mainstay in every teacher's kit; they can be easily integrated into lesson plans. Hussey distributed several samples that she had organized into file folder categories such as *Animals, Sports, Environment* and *Landscape*. She also described activities for various levels of language proficiency.

An advanced level lesson, for example, could include Compare and Contrast questions using 'before' and 'after' photos (*What was it like before?* and *What is it like now?*)

The buzz of conversation both during and after the workshop was proof that participants were clearly inspired and enthused. I can just imagine how many of us made a beeline to our local *Office Depot* store to buy and personalize our own portable teacher's kit that very afternoon.

With a growing demand for supply teaching, this practical approach to organizing our own portable teaching kit gave all of us 'teachers on the go' a valuable professional tool. And it was a nice complement and balance to more pedagogical and theoretical workshops.

♦

*Gloria McPherson is coordinator and lead teacher for the full-time TESL program at Seneca College. She is currently completing her Ph.D. at OISE. She co-authored the second edition of the textbook Breakthroughs for Oxford University Press, which is to be published in September. It has been completely updated with about 70 per cent new readings, listening and related activities and a new focus on academic vocabulary. An intermediate level text is scheduled for release in 2008.*

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*Pauline Hussey has a B. Ed. in adult education from Brock University and graduated from Seneca's TESL program in 2005. She has taught at COSTI in Markham and Richmond Hill and does private tutoring. She has designed curriculum for Seneca's Continuing Education program as well as private companies and is currently teaching at Seneca's Markham campus in the Tourism program where we have a number of international students. Her interests include teaching speaking with a focus on pronunciation as well as listening skills.*

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## Spring 2007 Conference Session Report

### Cowboys in the Classroom

Presenter: Jennifer Harris

Reviewer: Clayton Graves

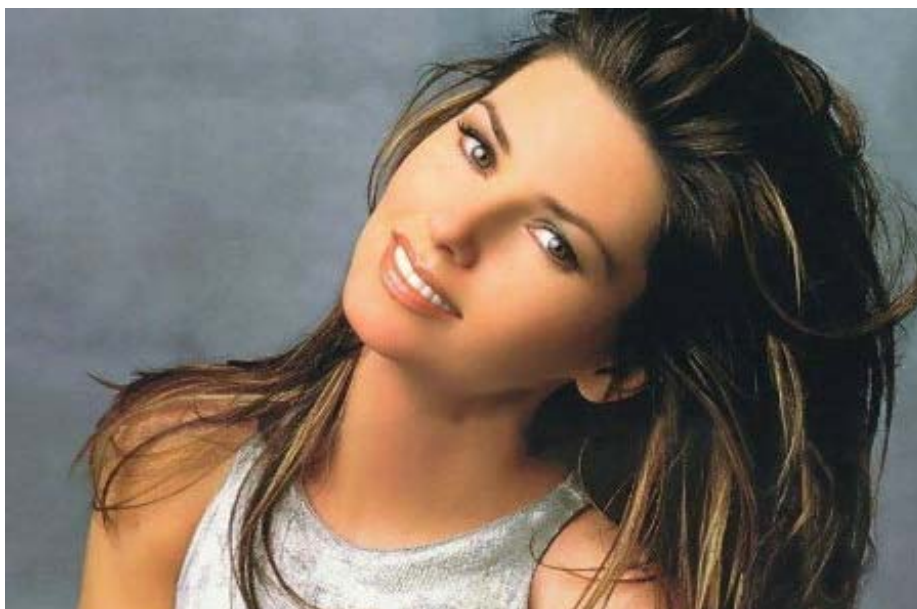
**Jennifer Harris' workshop** on country and western music provided a refreshing take on using songs to help teach English. Harris is an instructor in the Language Training for EFLTeaching program at the University of Toronto.

Why country and western music? Harris was drawn to its potential for language learning as she observed her own students' song selections for ESL instruction. The popular love songs they usually chose did provide material for vocabulary work (idioms, slang, rhyme, and a beat), but their choices also had real limitations.

With a little investigation, Harris discovered that country and western tunes, by contrast, contain all the emotional punch of standard love songs, but offer something extra – they tell a story. As she found out, it's this narrative quality that prompts more language learning.

For one thing, the narrative element provides an idea structure to help make the lyrics memorable. And because the songs describe real human experience – its tragedies, joys, fears, doubts, and failures – they also introduce high-frequency informal language we all use to talk about everyday life.

Country songs are set with emotional hooks, so learners respond to them on a personal level. In contrast to sappy, middle-of-the-road love ballads, Harris found that country music prompts much more classroom discussion, debate, and sharing of experience.



*Shania Twain: She's not just a pretty face, she's also an English teaching aid.*

In addition, whatever you think of country music – and there are those who regard it with disdain – it's an authentic North American cultural form. For that reason alone, claims Harris, it's worth using in the ESL classroom.

Many country songs explore important social and personal topics, as well: the ups and downs of human relationships, the pain of alcoholism and divorce, moving to a new place, imprisonment, the frustrations of dead-end jobs, loneliness, abandonment, self-doubt, love and loss. And Harris's sample material certainly covered the range of those themes.

To ease the suspicions of those who think country tunes are only about 'hurtin' and 'cheatin', however, Jennifer also shared examples of songs filled with jokes, word play, and social satire. Such songs as *A Boy Named Sue* by Johnny Cash, *I Love this Bar* by Toby Keith, or *I'm Gonna Miss Her* by Brad Paisley prove her point.

Harris then introduced that icon of the Canadian country genre, Stompin' Tom Connors. Take his song, *A Real Canadian Girl*, for example. It's one of the best songs to introduce non-English

*(Continued on page 15)*

## Spring 2007 Conference Session Report

# Cowboys in the Classroom



*Jennifer Harris in the classroom*

*(Continued from page 14)*

speakers to the concept of rhyme. (Jennifer reminded us that a lot of L2 learners have limited experience with rhyme, since it's not an element of poetic structure in some languages, though it figures large in English.)

All of Stompin' Tom's songs are heavy on rhyme, with an easy-to-follow

rhythm that invites learners to tap their toes, snap their fingers, and nod their heads as they follow the beat. In this way the songs provide good teaching examples for stress and rhythm – and a good visual check for instructors, who can see immediately whether the learners are 'getting it.'

But, as Jennifer pointed out, *A Real Canadian Girl* has more than just rhythm and rhyme. It also introduces students to the names of different regions of Canada – Acadia, Miramichi, the Cariboo, Saskatchewan, the Yukon, and B.C., for example.

The song is also filled with Canadian cultural references – hockey, skating, northern lights, curling, and snowmobiles. So, in studying *A Real Canadian Girl*, ESL learners become familiar with culturally-specific references as well as a lot of Canadian geography.

"My students certainly want to learn more about Canada, and I suspect that yours do, too," says Harris "So why not use country songs as the entrée? Just be sure," she adds, "to have a wall map of Canada handy."

There are scores of Canadian singer/songwriters whose work is somewhat more sophisticated than that of Stompin' Tom, but equally useful. Teachers should explore the songs of such Canadian country musicians as Paul Brandt, Shania Twain, Michelle Wright, Terry Clark, Chris Cummings and Ian Tyson.

Those who have used Shania Twain's *She's Not Just a Pretty Face* know that it is useful for more than learning verbs and nouns to describe occupations; it's the fact that all of these occupations are realistic career options for modern women that strikes a resonant chord with many students. ("*She's a geologist – a romance novelist/She is a mother of three/She is a soldier- she is a wife/She is a surgeon – she'll save your life...*")

To explore the field of country music recordings and get yourself up to speed, you can check out the Country Music Television channel. And don't forget to visit YouTube on the internet, where you'll find complete music videos of dozens of Canadian and American country artists.

And be sure to Google some of the song titles and singers listed in the sidebar on page 16. To find the words for the songs, go to [www.lyrics.com](http://www.lyrics.com). Google images is a great source of pictures for language activity sheets.

A word of caution, however: choose your songs with care. What works in one classroom will not work in another. Be sensitive to the cultural characteristics of your particular class.

For other teachable song material you can't beat the classic country works of singers such as Loretta Lynn, Tammy Wynette, Dolly Parton, and Patsy Cline, says Harris.

*(Continued on page 16)*

## Spring 2007 Conference Session Report

# Cowboys in the Classroom



*Brad Paisley, Stompin' Tom Connors, Paul Brandt can be corralled into your teaching materials*

Harris has used Loretta Lynn's *Don't Come Home a-Drinkin'*, for example, to teach alternatives to the standard dialogue markers, 'he said/she said' in reported speech.

You can also use country songs to teach reductions, linking of sounds, the silent 'h', syllabification, collocations, auxiliary verbs, and double negatives. They are also useful for teaching complex verb structures, rhyme, and terms such as verse, stanza, bridge, and chorus.

As for actually finding and getting songs to use in the ESL classroom, the internet may be the best and certainly the cheapest source. Teachers can download individual songs for 99 cents apiece rather than buy a whole CD. Go to iTunes, Napster or Musicmatch on your computer and follow the instructions. You can usually preview a song before you decide to buy it.

Once bought, you can store it on your hard drive.

In her own classes, Jennifer tries to alternate whole-group listening activities with individual listening experiences. She also recommends having individual headphone sets to allow students more autonomy.

She has also noticed that students sing or hum along much more when they can listen on their own. And they come back to old favorites for repeat listening. All of these are sure signs that the material has worked.

So, advises Jennifer Harris, don't shy away from using country and western music. The language learning will richly reward your effort. *Yee-hah!* ♦

### Some Country singers worth exploring:

Shania Twain, Toby Keith, Tammy Wynette, Loretta Lynn, Dolly Parton, Brad Paisley, Randy Travis, k.d. lang, Patsy Cline, The Dixie Chicks, Paul Brandt, Terry Clarke, Michelle Wright, Willie Nelson, George Strait, Stompin' Tom Connors.

### Some Country songs worth exploring:

She's not just a Pretty Face — Shania Twain  
 Forever and ever, Amen — Randy Travis  
 D-I-V-O-R-C-E — Dolly Parton  
 I Love this Bar — Toby Keith  
 I'm Gonna Miss Her — Brad Paisley  
 Don't Come Home a-Drinkin' — Tammy Wynette  
 The Hockey Song: The Good Ol' Hockey Game — Stompin Tom Connors  
 Alcohol — Brad Paisley  
 Black Coffee — k.d. lang  
 A Boy Named Sue — Johnny Cash  
 He was a Friend of Mine — Willie Nelson



*Online music services make music more affordable: a single song can cost 99 cents to download, an entire album costs about \$10.*



## Behind the Scenes in ESL Publishing: Waking up to a new edition of *Ontario Reader*

by Guenther Zuern



*There's a typo on the cover!  
The file is corrupted and the job won't print!  
You'll get sued for using that photo!  
The book is two months behind schedule!*

**T**hese are the things publishers' nightmares are made of. They are particularly scary if the publisher is also the writer and editor, as is the case for *Ontario Reader*.

In February, I published the seventh edition of *Ontario Reader*. A lot of nightmares have visited my pillow since the first edition in 1997. After seven editions it's supposed to get easier, but I'm not sure that's the case. Self-publishing is a curious mixture of satisfaction and anxiety. For me, the most enjoyable part of the process is selecting, writing and designing the content. Unfortunately, there are many other challenges. Here are a few:

- Copyright clearance: This is a time consuming and expensive process. Even a simple adaptation requires permission from the copyright holder

(not necessarily the writer) and payment of a fee for one-time use.

- Keeping up with technology: *Ontario Reader* is laid out in Adobe InDesign. It uses photos and illustrations prepared in Adobe PhotoShop and Adobe Illustrator. Production involves large photo file transfers. There's scanning, digital photography, maintaining a website....
- Exhaustion: *Ontario Reader* does not support a family. It's a sideline. You might even call it a labour of love. So, it has to be tacked on to a regular day job. After all day at work at the computer, you get to come home and spend all evening at the computer.

Sound like a big chore?

It feels that way at times, but overall it's satisfying, interesting and challenging. I'm already thinking about the next edition.

### What was the seventh edition's nightmare?

A day before the book was to be delivered, I got a call from the printer (everything had gone well up to that point). They had printed the entire book and were starting the trimming and binding. After the 800<sup>th</sup> copy was bound, the trimmer noticed an unusual bit of text at the top of page 36. Stop the machines! About one-eighth of an inch from the top of the page was a stray bit of text that said: *Answer key page 89*. How it got there, nobody knows. It wasn't in the mock-up I sent to the printer. I didn't see it in the proofs. But when I opened the InDesign file, sure enough, there it was.

What to do?

"Keep going," I said. "It's an obvious mistake. It looks odd and foolish, but it's not going to create any learning problems."

But the printer wouldn't accept that.

"Let me try something. I'll call you back."

Try something?

The solution he called back with was to trim an eighth of an inch off the top of the entire book.

"It looks great. In my opinion, this is the way to go," he said.

Unable to see the results of his experiment, I gave in to his advice. But that night I churned with anxiety. There's going to be less white space at the top. The pages will look cramped. My carefully considered design is compromised. Toss. Turn. Toss. Turn.

The book arrived next day. It looked a little shorter than usual, but not as terrible as I had imagined.

Is the design compromised? Should I have lived with a visible blooper on page 36?

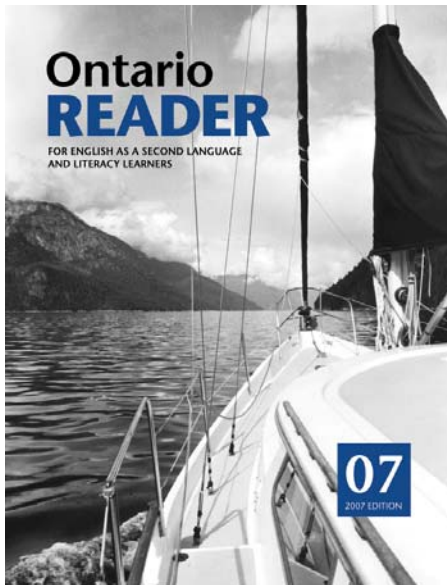
You decide. And welcome to the world of self-publishing. ♦

*Guenther Zuern is the publisher of Ontario Reader. Published every two years by Newcomer Communications of Toronto, it is a 96-page soft-cover collection of news, stories, and information about life in Ontario and Canada.*

## NEW MATERIALS REVIEW

### *Ontario Reader*

## 2007 Edition: for English as a Second Language and Literacy Learners



Ontario Reader: 2007 Edition: for English as a Second Language and Literacy Learners

by Guenther Zuern *Newcomer Communications, Toronto*

Approximate CLB levels: 2 – 5

Instructional levels: Beginner to Intermediate

**T**eachers are already welcoming Guenther Zuern's new issue of *Ontario Reader*, an illustrated 96-page soft cover workbook for ESL and Literacy classes. It's filled with short, high-interest reading selections about life in Ontario and Canada. Each selection comes with clear, well-developed classroom practice exercises.

The 50 stories and articles are adapted from newspapers and other sources and cover people, places and events. The

content is intended for Beginner to Intermediate level learners. The selections are written at different levels of difficulty, clearly indicated by one, two or three stars. The range of difficulty corresponds roughly to Levels 2 – 5 of the Canadian Language Benchmarks.

Each story in *Ontario Reader* comes with a page of language activities to help learners improve their reading and writing skills. Learners will also find an Answer Key at the back of the book, for self-checking.

In addition, the publisher has included a self-contained *Teacher's Guide* that

1. Describes the reading level system.
2. Presents pre-reading activities.
3. Explains some classroom uses of the learning activities. The exercises cover a wide range of skills in Reading Comprehension, Vocabulary Development, Grammar and Controlled Writing.

Additional communicative activities supplement the exercises on the practice pages. And to help with vocabulary development, teachers will find a list of more than 425 Key Vocabulary words, arranged both alphabetically and by grammatical function. For busy teachers, *Ontario Reader* is a well-thought-out resource that will help to cut down on lesson preparation time.

Many teachers also like the flexibility of the *Ontario Reader* as a teaching and learning resource. For example, some of the articles are written at two different difficulty levels. This allows students of varying abilities in multi-level classes to experience the same material and partici-

pate as a group in classroom discussions. Students who succeed with the easier version can move on to the more difficult version and thus build their reading skills.

*Ontario Reader* is clearly and professionally laid out and easy to follow. It is attractively illustrated with photographs, drawings, maps, charts, and sidebars containing short articles related to the themes of the selections. Students thus improve their visual literacy as they use the material.

The new issue of *Ontario Reader* also has clusters of thematically-related selections, covering larger topics such as: Canada's Immigration System, Newcomers and Employment, Government, and Canada Coast-to-Coast. Teachers who want to develop an overarching theme in the classroom can do so easily. Much of the content is right there.

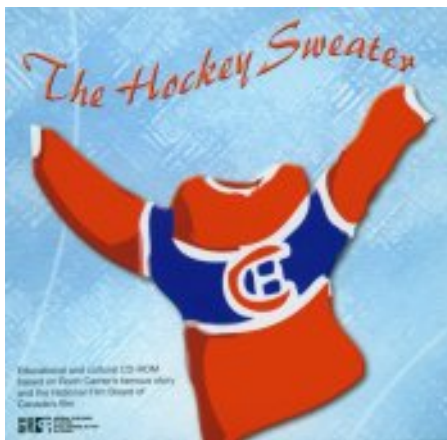
*Ontario Reader* sells at \$12 per copy. For orders of 20 or more copies, the price is \$10 per copy. And for those who don't already have them, the publisher still has stock of the 2003 and 2005 editions at the above prices. *Ontario Reader* is a good and wise investment in learning materials – and authentically Canadian. ♦

For ordering and information, go to: [www3.sympatico.ca/ontarioreader](http://www3.sympatico.ca/ontarioreader)  
e-mail: [ontarioreader@sympatico.ca](mailto:ontarioreader@sympatico.ca)

Regular mail:  
Newcomer Communications  
439 Montrose Avenue,  
Toronto ON M6G 3H2  
Fax: 416.537.0063

## NEW MATERIALS REVIEW

### ESL Meets NHL: *The Sweater* on CD, book



*The Hockey Sweater* – CD-ROM for adult and adolescent ESL learners. \$34.95 each + \$5.00 Shipping charge.

To order: [buymedia@ucalgary.ca](mailto:buymedia@ucalgary.ca)

*The Hockey Sweater* story was originally published in 1979. It comes straight out of Roch Carrier's own boyhood experiences growing up in an isolated rural Quebec community in the 1940s.

In fact, the tale has become one of the best-known works of Canadian literature, and is widely considered as an allegory for the cultural and linguistic tensions between French and English-Canada.

Like a hockey game itself, the content of the CD-ROM is divided into 3 periods. The 1st Period is primarily for Listening. The 2nd Period is for Listening and Reading. The 3rd Period is for Listening, Reading and Writing, and studying Canadian culture and heritage.

It's a flexible learning resource that can be used by individual students, small groups of learners, or with the whole class.

#### Features

In the 1st period, the short story is presented as a 10-minute animated film. It is narrated by the author himself, who speaks English with a French-Canadian accent, something that students will no doubt get used to with repeated viewing. In this period, the film is also presented in video clips for convenient re-viewing of story segments. Learners can view and listen and even begin some of the language activities.

In the 2nd Period, the complete story text is introduced, side by side with the film.

As a bonus, in the "Exploring the Story" section, your students can listen to the story text spoken by a native English speaker at normal speaking rate. Just click on the word "Coach" at the bottom left of the computer screen. This second narration is accompanied by still pictures taken from the film, depicting the most important events in the story text. The 2nd period contains most of the CD-ROM's language learning exercises.

In the 3rd Period, the ideas in the film and story are expanded, with texts for reading, film clips and artwork that provide additional information about Canadian culture and heritage. The topics

**A**re you looking for new multi-media content for your ESL class? The Visual Resources Centre of the University of Calgary has just released a CD-ROM based on Roch Carrier's famous story, *The Hockey Sweater* – a distinctly Canadian learning resource that may fit your needs.

With the renowned writer's 1979 short story as its focus, this interactive package has almost everything you could want.

(Continued on page 20)

## NEW MATERIALS REVIEW

### ESL Meets NHL: *The Sweater* on CD, book



*The hero of all Quebec boys in the 1940s and 50s, including author Roch Carrier, was Maurice 'The Rocket' Richard of the Montreal Canadiens hockey team. His famous hockey sweater bore the number 9.*

*(Continued from page 19)*

include the game of hockey, pages from the Eaton's Catalogue of 1946-47 (when the story is set), and the well-known song by Stompin' Tom Connors - 'The Good Old Hockey Game'.

#### Language-learning Exercises

These exercises are interactive, based on the film, and presented at three levels of difficulty – Peewee (for high beginners), Junior (for Intermediate learners) and Pro (high intermediate to advanced levels). You'll find them in Period 1 and Period 2.



*Roch Carrier as a child wearing the blue-and-white of Toronto's Maple Leafs*

Learners who want to do the activities on their own can choose their difficulty level and, with initial teacher guidance, work through the content alone. However, most teachers may want to use the resource with the whole class, at least the first time through the material.

The exercises are designed to aid story comprehension and listening skills. For example, learners view pictures from the film and match them to story events, spoken words or sentences. They also respond to multiple-choice oral questions on story content.

Many of the exercises use the drag and drop feature. Students first listen to the oral cue, locate the matching picture, click on the picture and drag it to the correct slot, where they 'drop' the pictorial answer. They can then get immediate feedback and explanations for their answers.

In addition, the CD provides written comprehension questions, cloze exercises and plot puzzles which ask learners to order sentences from the story text

into correct sequence. Students can also write questions, try out their new vocabulary, and make notes for themselves in the Notebook feature. Even learners with limited literacy skills can complete many of the exercises on their own.

#### Additional Content Features

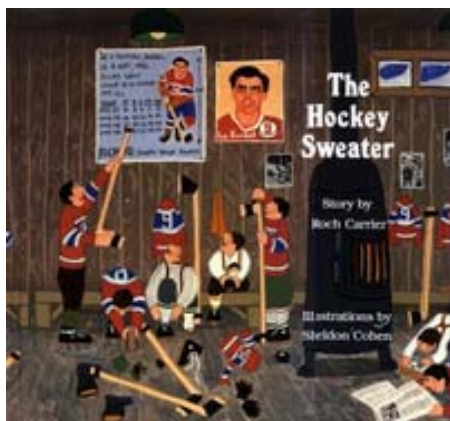
A multi-media dictionary supports learners throughout. The dictionary includes word meanings, contextual usages, collocations, synonyms, antonyms and derivatives. Learners can hear the pronunciation and even view an illustration, where appropriate.

The CD-ROM presents Canadian cultural information on a host of topics ranging from the significance of winter in Canada to the role of the church in Quebec society in the 1900s. Students can learn about olden days dating rituals, the place of the rocking chair in rural homes, early recycling efforts when rags were re-woven into braided rugs, and French-English relations in Canada.

*(Continued on page 21)*

## NEW MATERIALS REVIEW

### ESL Meets NHL: *The Sweater* on CD, book



Old school: The book version

*The Hockey Sweater* by Roch Carrier. Translated by Sheila Fischman. Illustrated by Sheldon Cohen. Paperback 1985 Tundra Books. Also available in French (*Le Chandail de Hockey*)

(Continued from page 20)

Students will be amused as well as informed as they study pages from the 1946-47 Eaton's mail order catalogue – how styles (and prices) change! The catalogue pages also come with practice exercises for ordering catalogue items.

Anyone who has ever followed a sport fanatically will enjoy the section called 'Zone'. Students can read hockey cards of today's stars and the NHL champions of yesteryear, and make up a Dream Team of their own.

For those with a literary bent, the CD-ROM also presents a filmed interview with the story's author, Roch Carrier. He

recounts how he came to write the story and reflects on why it became so popular, and not only in Canada. Carrier also comments on the connection between sports and reading, what we learn in childhood, and how life is like hockey.

Learners may also be interested in reading about animator and illustrator, Sheldon Cohen, the artist who transformed Roch Carrier's story into the award-winning animated film and also illustrated the paperback version of the story.

The softcover book version is still in print and available in bookstores, more than 25 years after its publication in both English and French.

The Encounters section also presents a short biographical sketch of Sheila Fischman, who translated the famous story into English.

As additional cultural content, the CD-ROM contains a series of short film clips with Quebec folk artist, Marcel Dargis, in which he tells the story of his life and his artistic inspirations, and recalls an experience just like the precipitating event of Roch Carrier's sweater story. Some of Dargis' charming paintings are also presented in a small gallery.

And we can't forget the rollicking appeal of Stompin' Tom Connors' famous hockey song, "The Good Ol' Hockey Game".

One or two features of the material may raise some eyebrows, but overall the

presentation is clear, logical, attractive, and varied.

Some reviewers have noted that the instructional material is read and pronounced very carefully – perhaps a tad too carefully, using full forms rather than contractions.

The cultural material in the Encounters section is also written at quite a high reading and concept level, and may need to be read aloud and explained by the teacher for some students. But these are minor quibbles.

*The Hockey Sweater* CD-ROM will not only help your students learn language from authentic sources but come to a deeper understanding of the importance of the sport of hockey in Canadian culture. All in all, it's a classroom resource well worth exploring. ♦



*The five-dollar bill features an excerpt from The Hockey Sweater in English and French. You might need a magnifying glass to read it, but look for the text on the left side of the bill, beside the picture of the little boy tobogganing. The English version reads: "The winters of my childhood were long, long seasons. We lived in three places – the school, the church, and the skating rink – but our real life was on the skating rink."*

# Point and Click

**CBC archives on The Hockey Sweater.** Use your browser and type in “CBC Archives.”

[www.archives.cbc.ca](http://www.archives.cbc.ca)

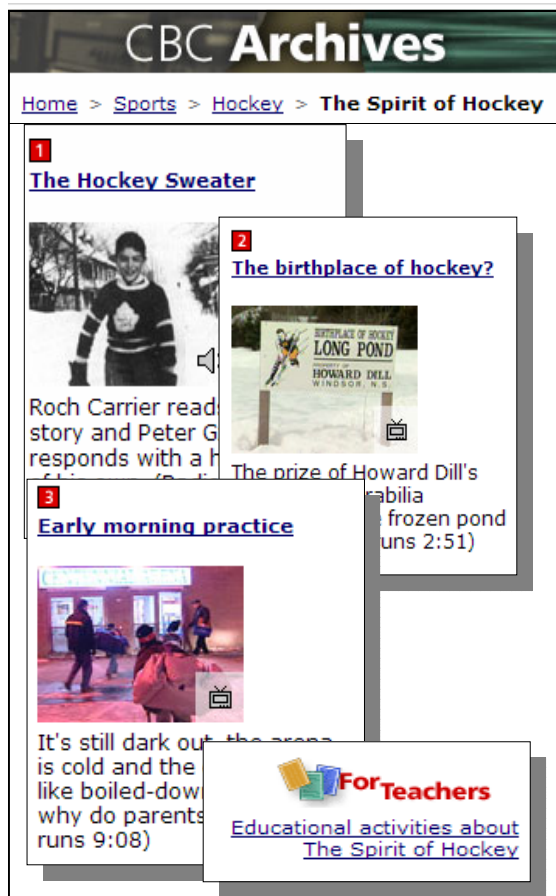
When you arrive at the home page for CBC archives, in the empty box at the top left titled “Search the archives site,” type in “The Hockey Sweater” and click “OK.”

You will come to a page called The Spirit of Hockey. Click on the first item about “The Hockey Sweater.”

The material includes an interview with Roch Carrier by then-CBC Morningside host Peter Gzowski, as well as other informative and entertaining material.

There are 12 other ‘shows’ that cover a range of hockey-related topics such as:

- The Birthplace of Hockey
- Canada’s Hockey Dad: Walter Gretzky
- She Shoots, She Scores!
- The Language of Hockey



**ESLvideo.com**

ESLvideo.com – This site provides free ESLvideo quizzes and resources for ESL.

Quiz difficulty level:

- beginning
- low intermediate
- intermediate
- high intermediate

The first quiz contains video clips of many different people interviewed on the street, telling what they can do. It contains both subtitles and closed captions; for example, “Can you cook?” and “What’s your best dish?” Excellent for authentic speaking samples.



By Karen Thomson

In this column we highlight just a few websites that you can explore with your class or by yourself.