



JANUARY 2026

ALBERTA TEACHERS OF ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

Winter Newsletter



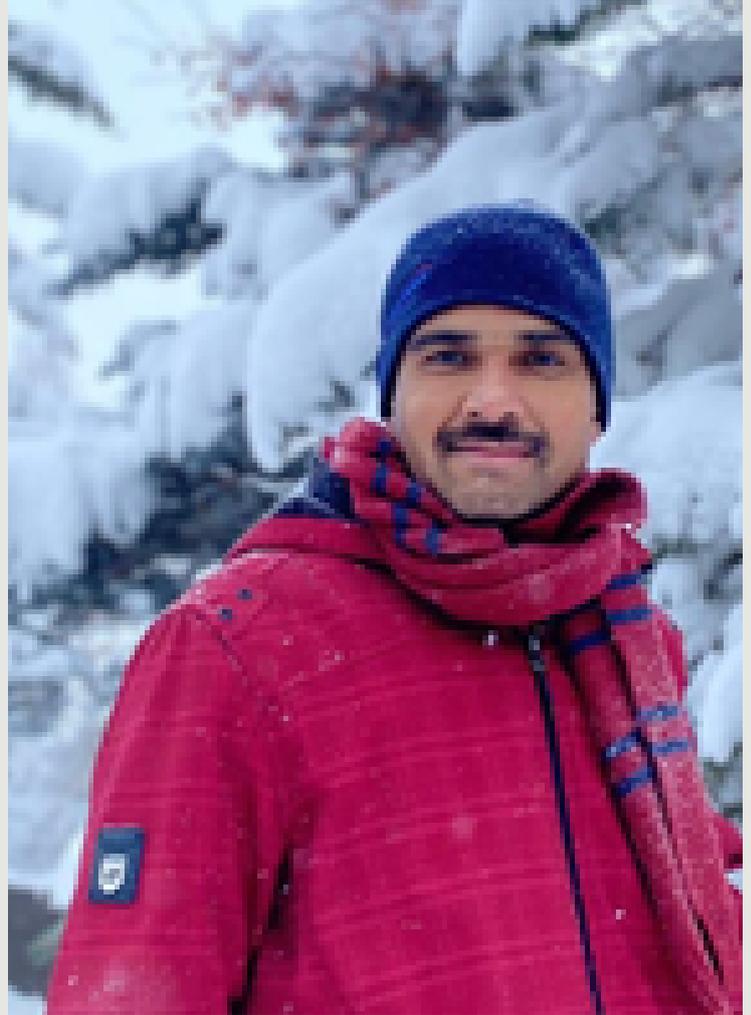
Janet Kwong (L) & Elina Stop (R) - Managers of the 2025 ATEAL Symposium - Infinite Paths: EAL for a Transformed World - hosted on Friday, May 23rd 2025 at the University of Alberta.

ATEAL takes this opportunity to acknowledge the traditional territories of the Indigenous peoples and the Métis Settlements and Métis Nation of Alberta. We respect the histories, languages, and cultures of all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our community.

President's Message

Johnson Kunnel

We are proud to announce our new name! At the 2025 Annual General Meeting, the membership voted in favour of an inclusive name to better reflect the diversity and multilingual backgrounds of our learners and teachers, many who speak numerous languages. We would like to thank all members and board representatives who contributed to the process by participating in the survey, discussions, and the AGM.



Now, we are proud to unveil our new logo and our website ateal.ca. Our email addresses have also been updated. For example, Irene can be reached at ateal.admin@ateal.ca and Johnson can be reached at president@ateal.ca. Watch for our rebranding on social media!



Highlights from 2025

Spring Symposium



2025 Symposium Managers, Elina Stop (L) and Janet Kwong (R)

The ATEAL One-Day Spring Symposium on May 23rd brought EAL educators together for a day of professional learning and connection. The keynote by Jeff Kuntz explored the challenges and possibilities of using generative AI in EAL classrooms, alongside concurrent sessions on digital technology, literacy, curriculum, and assessment. ATEAL members were thrilled to come together face-to-face, and the event received very positive feedback from participants!

Fall Conference



2025 Fall Conference, President Johnson Kunnel (L) and Conference Managers Desiree Pomerleau (C) and Reyhaneh Ghadir Zadeh (R)

The 2025 ATEAL Fall Conference, Teaching Forward: Reimagine, Connect, Empower, took place virtually on October 17 and 18 and offered EAL professionals a chance to learn, reflect, and connect during a time of rapid change in our field. Sessions focused on reimagining teaching practices, supporting well-being, and navigating the challenges facing educators and learners. A special thank you goes to all the volunteers who made the conference possible, and a very special thanks to conference managers Desiree and Reyhaneh for the tireless work and care they put into organizing this event!



Board Members

May Yeung, Past President

May holds undergraduate degrees in psychology and education, a certificate in teaching ESL, and a graduate degree in educational psychology, and is pursuing an educational doctorate in language and literacy while working as an EAP/ESP instructor at MacEwan University.

A knowledge seeker with a passion for languages and intercultural connections, May has published in intercultural mentorship, curriculum redesign, and artificial intelligence, and is honoured to be part of ATESL and committed to serving English language learners.



Desiree Pomerleau, Secretary

Desiree Pomerleau began her teaching career with an Elementary Education degree from the University of Alberta before moving into Adult EAL in Calgary, where she has spent 12 years teaching LINC, EAL, and IELTS Preparation to learners at all levels.

Now working in language assessment and curriculum development, Desiree is passionate about supporting newcomers' success in Canada and enjoys an active life in Calgary with her family.



Doug Vantour, Treasurer

Doug has been teaching since 2012, beginning in Occupational Health and Safety before moving into language instruction through volunteer work with CCI-LEX and now teaching with the Edmonton Catholic School District LINC program.

An advocate for lifelong learning, cultural identity, and respect for all, Doug brings committee and board experience to ATEAL and enjoys spending his free time outdoors, cooking, and gardening.



Irene Wood, Business Manager

Irene has been with ATEAL since 2007, and she took on the role of Business Manager in 2012. Working with ATEAL has been one of the most rewarding jobs ever, and when she's not performing Business Manager duties, Irene enjoys hiking and camping.



Board Members

Sofia Elgueta, ATEAL Representative to TESL Canada

Sofia has 20 years of EAL teaching experience. She has taught children and adults in South America, as well as at the University of Alberta's English Language School since 2008 where she specializes in Academic English and courses for specific purposes. She is committed to student-centred learning, professional development, and helping learners thrive, and she looks forward to sharing ATEAL's initiatives as Social Media Coordinator.



Lia dela Cruz, Alberta Routes Representative

Rosalia dela Cruz is an EAL practitioner in Canada with 15 years of experience, whose work spans classroom teaching, language assessment, curriculum development, and teacher training, and she currently serves as the Alberta Routes Advisor for Central Alberta supporting grassroots EAL programs. Based in Edmonton, she enjoys hiking, biking, and cooking hearty soups for her family during the cold months.

Herly Cervera, Advocacy Committee Chair

Herly holds an MA in English and a PhD in Educational Management from the Philippines and has nearly 10 years of experience as a university professor and researcher before moving to Canada in 2012, where she has since taught LINC/ESL, led employment and youth programs, and currently teaches in the LEAP program at MRU.

With 13 years in EAL/ESL, she helps diverse learners build language and job-ready skills, has presented locally and internationally, and is guided by the principle of continuous improvement, while enjoying poetry and nature photography in her free time.



Zuzana Buchanan, Communications Chair

Zuzana has over 20 years of EAL teaching experience, earning her Master's in Education in Slovakia before teaching LINC and ESL in Canada and later English for Academic Purposes at the University of Alberta.

She now splits her time between EAP instruction and Student Engagement, advocating for inclusive education and strong learning communities, and serves as ATEAL's Communications Chair.

Board Members

Pamela Ndumbi, Edmonton Co-Chair

Pamela Ndumbi is a recent University of Alberta graduate with a B.A. in English and an M.Ed. in TESL who has been passionate about teaching for as long as she can remember.

She has taught EAP, EAL, and LINC across a wide range of CLB levels and now works as a literacy instructor with the Edmonton Catholic School District LINC Program. She's eager to make a meaningful difference in the community.



Bahareh Khouzani, Edmonton Co-Chair

Bahareh Karkheiran Khouzani holds a Bachelor's degree in English Translation Studies, a TESOL certificate from Arizona State University, and a Master of Education in TESL from the University of Alberta. She's accumulated over eight years of ESL teaching experience in the LINC program.

She is committed to supporting newcomers through language and digital literacy, with professional interests in literacy, listening, trauma-informed pedagogy, and contributing meaningfully to the ATEAL community.

LaRae Stephan, Central Alberta Co-chair

A warm welcome to LaRae Stephan—our new ATEAL Central Alberta Co-chair. We are excited to have LaRae on board!



Board Members



Jani Krulc, Calgary Co-Chair

Jani Krulc began teaching EAL in Montreal while completing her MA in English at Concordia University and has since taught in LINC and the English Language Foundations program at SAIT.

She has also taught Communications and Creative Writing, leads Calgary's Flywheel reading series, has served on the board of *Filling Station* magazine, and was the 2023 ATEAL Conference co-chair.

Holly Sadowsky, Calgary Co-Chair

Holly Sadowsky has been teaching English across diverse cultural and educational settings for 25 years, including classrooms in Thailand, South Korea, and throughout Canada. For the past 14 years, she has been a dedicated SAIT faculty member, inspiring learners through student-centred instruction. She lives in Calgary with her two daughters, cat, and dog.



Susanna Gonsalvez, Southern Alberta Co-Chair

Susanna has several years of experience as an ESL instructor, teaching in multiple countries and diverse, multicultural classrooms, including EAP and LINC programs in Canada.

She holds an M.Ed. in TEAL from the University of Calgary and is currently pursuing a Doctor of Education. She is honoured to serve on the ATEAL Board and contribute to the organization's goals and professional community.

Vacant Position

PRESIDENT ELECT:

ATEAL is still seeking a President Elect to join our volunteer Board of Directors, as there were no nominees at the AGM this October.

The Board invites nominations from the membership, and in accordance with the ATEAL Bylaws: "Any temporary vacancy in the Board of Directors may be filled by appointment by the Board of Directors with such appointee to hold office until the next General Meeting"

If you are interested in joining the Board, and taking on the role of President Elect, please email ateal.admin@ateal.ca with any questions.

See job description here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/11AjXP1ZPQ8A2fop9TiNtWa_5V1u3dTmVGBT73gwh1a8/edit?usp=sharing

Alberta Routes

The following professional development opportunities are available in Winter 2026 and are always free of charge:

Online Study Groups

Foundational Concepts on Social Justice – Join an interactive six-session study group designed to explore key concepts in social justice and equity. Together, we'll develop critical perspectives on complex issues such as racism, oppression, privilege, and power. Participants will be encouraged to engage thoughtfully and courageously, examining their own identities in relation to knowledge, skills, and attitudes. This is a space for reflection, dialogue, and growth—where learning is both personal and collective.

Week 1: Diversity, equity and inclusion

Week 2: Race, racism, racial discrimination and racialization

Week 3: Intersectionality

Week 4: Oppression and power

Week 5: Privilege

Week 6: Putting it all together

Please be prepared to commit to all 6 sessions.

- **Dates:** March 16, 23, 30; April 13, 20, 27 (Mondays)
- **Time:** 10:30AM -12:00PM
- **To register:** <https://forms.office.com/r/QriXQie8e2>
- **For questions, email** Rosalia.Delacruz@norquest.ca

Intercultural Communication (Level 1) – In this first course in a three-part series, participants explore Indigenous history as well as theories of intercultural competency. They will discuss ways to develop cross-cultural leadership tools intended to support a diverse workplace and learning community. This acquired knowledge will then be applied to case studies, online discussions, and reflective practices.

Module 1: Foundations in Intercultural Communication

Module 2: Aspects of Culture

Module 3: Self-awareness and challenging assumptions

Module 4: Strategies and approaches for navigating culture

Module 5: The role of culture and communication in the socialization process

- **Dates: March 24, 31, April 7, 14, 21 (Tuesdays)**
- **Time: 9:30-11:00AM**
- **For information on registration, email Alana.Johnson@norquest.ca**

New Webinar: Teaching Senior EAL Learners

This interactive workshop equips participants with the tools and understanding needed to support senior adults who are learning English as an additional language (EAL). Participants will discover best practices to teach and connect with senior learners, including tips for them engaged and making lessons meaningful. The session also looks at topics and materials that reflect seniors' real-life experiences and interests. By the end of this workshop, participants will feel more confident creating a welcoming and respectful learning space for senior EAL learners.

- **Date: February 26, Thursday**
- **Time: 2:30PM-4:00PM**
- **Location: Tutela**

Microcredentials

Alberta Routes has been working closely with NorQuest College curriculum teams to explore the creation of short learning certifications or microcredentials using the existing Alberta Routes course offerings.

The first of three (3) microcredentials is scheduled to launch in early 2026: The EAL Educator microcredential will equip practitioners with essential skills to help learners acquire foundational English language skills, focusing on effective teaching strategies and learner assessment.

Stay tuned for further announcements and updates!

Your ATEAL Membership Includes TESL Canada! What Are Your Benefits?



TESL CANADA
Teachers of English as a Second Language - Canada

As a member of ATEAL, you are automatically a member of TESL Canada. A portion of your ATEAL membership fee supports TESL Canada, ensuring that Alberta educators have a strong voice at the national level—and access to important professional benefits.

One of the most significant benefits of TESL Canada membership is national professional certification. TESL Canada administers the only nationally recognized standards for ESL teacher certification and teacher training program recognition. These standards are widely used and respected across Canada and are required or preferred by many employers, including Languages Canada programs and federally or provincially funded LINC and ELSA programs. For many educators, TESL Canada certification is essential for employment mobility, professional credibility, and long-term career growth.

Beyond certification, TESL Canada membership offers a range of professional supports and opportunities, including:

- Representation and advocacy at the national level, with ATEAL represented directly on the TESL Canada Board
- Access to the TESL Canada Journal, a peer-reviewed publication for practitioners, researchers, and teacher educators
- Professional development updates, conferences, and learning opportunities shared through TESL Canada Connects
- Eligibility for travel grants, conference fee waivers, professional learning bursaries, and teaching awards
- Work opportunities with national and local job postings
- Optional group benefits plans, including health, dental, vision, and insurance coverage
- Recognition opportunities through Exemplary Teaching Awards and Honorary Life Member Awards



TESL CANADA
Teachers of English as a Second Language - Canada

As ATEAL's representative on the TESL Canada Board, my role is to act as a liaison—bringing Alberta's interests, concerns, and priorities to the national table while also keeping our membership informed about TESL Canada initiatives and opportunities.

If you have questions about TESL Canada certification or want to learn more about how your national membership supports your professional practice, I encourage you to explore the TESL Canada website or contact admin@tesl.ca

Your ATEAL membership connects you not only to a strong provincial community, but also to a national professional network that supports standards, advocacy, and excellence in TESL across Canada.

Sofia Elgueta

ATEAL Representative at TESL Canada Board



TESL CANADA
Teachers of English as a Second Language - Canada

TESL Canada Certification: FAQs (Quick Guide)

What is TESL Canada certification?

- TESL Canada certification recognizes professional qualifications to teach adult ESL/EFL. It is the only national certification standard endorsed by provincial affiliates, including ATEAL, and is widely required by employers across Canada.

Do I need to be a TESL Canada member to get certified?

- Yes. Certification is a service offered to members of TESL Canada. ATEAL members are automatically TESL Canada members, so you already meet this requirement.

Is membership the same as certification?

- No. Membership gives you access to professional learning, resources, grants, newsletters, and advocacy. Certification is a separate application process that formally recognizes your adult ESL teaching qualifications.

My TESL training isn't from a TESL Canada-recognized program. Do I have to start over?

- No. You can apply through PLAR (Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition). A TESL Canada adjudicator reviews your training and experience for equivalency. If anything is missing, you'll be guided on what coursework is needed. Many applicants successfully certify this way.

I have a Bachelor of Education and taught children. Am I eligible?

- TESL Canada certification is for adult ESL/EFL instruction. K-12 teaching credentials are governed by provincial teaching bodies and do not transfer to TESL Canada certification.

I taught EFL overseas. Can I be certified in Canada?

- Yes. Overseas teaching experience can count, especially through PLAR. If your training program is recognized, you can apply through the regular stream. International applicants must hold TESL Canada membership.

I completed my degree outside Canada. Is that okay?

- Yes, but you must submit a Canadian credential equivalency assessment from a recognized agency (e.g., WES, ICES, CES). TESL Canada does not require copies of your original degree.

TESL Canada Certification: FAQs (Quick Guide)

How do I document my teaching experience?

- You can submit contracts, letters from supervisors, employment records, or pay stubs that clearly show adult ESL/EFL classroom hours.

How long does certification take?

- Most complete applications are processed in 4–6 weeks. Incomplete files remain open for up to six months to allow time to submit missing documents.

What are the different certification standards?

- Standard One: 100+ hours coursework + 20–hour practicum
- Standard Two: 250+ hours coursework + 50–hour practicum
- Standard Three: Master’s degree in TESL/Applied Linguistics + 50–hour practicum

I have a Master’s degree in TESL from Canada. Am I eligible?

- Yes. Graduates of recognized Canadian TESL programs with an adult ESL practicum are eligible for Standard Three.

I’m certified through TESL Ontario or TESL Saskatchewan. Does that help?

- Yes. Standard One and Two certificants can apply through a streamlined process with a reduced fee.

Do I need a university degree?

- Yes. A three- or four-year bachelor’s degree is required for TESL Canada certification.

Is English proficiency required?

- If your undergraduate degree was not completed in an English-medium university in an approved country, you must submit IELTS Academic or TOEFL iBT scores (within the last two years). Some graduate degrees may meet this requirement automatically.

Where can I get more information?

Visit [tesl.ca/certification](https://www.tesl.ca/certification) or email admin@tesl.ca with specific questions about your application.

Stay tuned...

Please keep watching your emails, ATEAL's social media, and website to find out about the following:

- **Spring Bursary Opportunities** - closing March 15
- **Launch of ATEAL's Resource Developing Intercultural Competence through Narrative Métissage at the end of March**
- **2026 In person Spring Symposia in Edmonton and Calgary** - information coming soon
- **Information about the 2026 Fall Online Conference**

Call for Contributors

- Do you have some news you would like to be featured in the Spring 2026 newsletter for all ATEAL members to see? We invite you to email us at newsletter@ateal.ca !

Editor's note:

This ATEAL Winter 2026 Newsletter was compiled by Pamela Ndumbi (Edmonton Co-Chair), with contributions from ATEAL Board members.

Happy New Year!

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Chúc mừng năm mới!

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La mulți ani!

سال نو مبارک

Heri ya Mwaka Mpya!

С НОВЫМ ГОДОМ!

नव वर्ष की शुभकामनाएँ

Feliz Ano Novo!

새해 복 많이 받으세요

2026

Bonne année!

¡Feliz Año Nuevo!

سنة جديدة سعيدة

Gelukkig nieuwjaar!

Frohes neues Jahr!

明けましておめでとうございます
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Mutlu yıllar!

Felice Anno Nuovo!

З Новим роком!

Szczęśliwego Nowego Roku!

ਨਵੀਂ ਸਾਲ ਮੁਬਾਰਕ

E ku odun, e ku iyedun!

Unyaka omusha

Umwaka mwiza mushya!

omuhle!

Contact

Surface Mail

ATEAL

PO Box 1983 Station Main

Edmonton AB

T5J 2P3

(mail only)

Email

ask@ateal.ca

