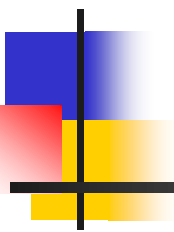


Professionalism in the Settlement Sector: Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language (ATESL)



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Historical Factors: Globalization

- International demand for English teachers ➔ notion that anyone who speaks English can teach it successfully.
- This created a lucrative market for a growing number of *short* training programs that claimed to produce qualified ESL teachers.



Second language acquisition

- Research on second language acquisition over 30 years led to a growing awareness of the need for specialized TESL training.
- TESL education changed in focus from teaching ‘techniques’ to developing a reflective orientation to both theory and practice.



Accreditation Rationale

ATESL (1992), *Accreditation of ESL Teachers in Alberta*

- “Accreditation defines a minimum combination of specialized education and experience to ensure [students’ right to quality instruction].”
- “Taking a stand on minimum requirements for ESL teachers sends a message to employers and funders that we are prepared to back our claim to professional status with action.”
- “[Accreditation] allows us... to identify and to bind ourselves as a cohesive group.”
- “Accreditation is part of the search for excellence, regardless of the recognition or status it brings.”



ATESL Accreditation

- Requirements:
 - Qualifications
 - Experience

- Options:
 - A (Full, Interim)
 - D (Individual consideration)



Option A: Qualifications

- An undergraduate degree (any field)
- a minimum of 250 contact hours of post-graduate or upper-level undergraduate coursework (~7 courses)
 - focused on specialized training in second language teaching from a provincially recognized post-secondary institution;
 - recognized by a university as equivalent to senior level undergraduate coursework.



Option A: Experience

- at least 250 hours of ESL classroom teaching experience, in classes of ESL students only.
 - teaching hours in a TESL degree program practicum qualify if the student teacher has full charge of the class, including planning, teaching, and marking;
 - volunteering qualifies if the volunteer has full charge of the class;
 - tutoring and working as an aide do not qualify.



Option D

A special category for candidates whose qualifications do not fall within the specifications [of Option A] and who wish to be considered on an individual basis. □

- qualifications must be perceived to be, at least, the equivalent of the requirements of option A;
- the usual applicant is an individual with foreign training in second language teaching.



Application Process

Applicant must be an ATESL member and submit the following:

1. an application form and fee of \$50 + GST;
2. proof of an undergraduate degree;
3. university transcripts and other information, if necessary, to document TESL training;
4. letter(s) from employer(s) to confirm that the applicant has taught at least 250 hours.



ATESL Interim Accreditation

- Interim Accreditation
 - applicants who have completed the formal training for Option A but have not amassed sufficient hours of teaching experience, and
 - applicants with post-graduate training and experience only in foreign countries.



Interim Extension

- Eligible for a maximum of 2 extensions, on condition that:
 - some teaching experience has been acquired during the year, and
 - a letter of recommendation from their employer/supervisor accompanies the request for extension.



Maintaining Accreditation

- Accredited instructors must have active ATESL membership in order to maintain their accreditation status. Membership in the professional organization is seen as an indicator of professionalism and of ongoing professional development and involvement.



TESL Professional

- To be a TESL professional in ATESL is to be a qualified teacher practitioner of adult ESL learners.
- Research shows that instruction is a key factor in learning. Accreditation is one measure of ensuring that learners receive quality instruction.
- Accredited instructors have an ethical obligation to provide quality instruction using current, evidence-based best practices.



Ongoing Professional Development

- Local chapters: monthly workshops
 - Calgary; Central Alberta; Edmonton
- Annual ATESL conference
- National TESL Canada conference
- Professional development bursaries
- Special Interest Groups (SIG) - Settlement issues; Intercultural communication; LINC; Rural issues; Testing, evaluation, and assessment; ESL literacy, etc.



Impact

- *Best practices for Adult ESL/EAL and LINC Programs in Alberta* (1994, 2004)
 - established minimum program standards as an increasing number of programs began applying for LINC funding in 1990s
 - ATESL's definition of "professionalism" = accreditation (qualifications, experience, membership in a professional organization)
- *Ethical Guidelines for ESL Professionals in Alberta* (2001) (regarding learners, colleagues, profession)



Alberta Occupational Profile for ESL Teacher (2005)

“No consistent academic requirement has been established for teachers of adult ESL classes. Each employer sets its own hiring policies, requirements and standards. Consequently, required qualifications vary greatly. However, many employers prefer to hire applicants who have a Bachelor’s degree and accreditation from Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language or TESL Canada.”



TESL Canada

Professional Certification

- Professional Certification Standards
 - One (Interim, Permanent)
 - Two (Interim, Permanent)
 - Three (Interim, Permanent)
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)



TESL Canada Standards

Prerequisite: **Undergraduate degree**

| Level | Courses* | Practicum* | Experience** |
|-------|----------|------------|--------------|
| One | 100 hr. | 20 hr. | 1000 h. |
| Two | 250 hr. | 20 hr. | 1500 h. |
| Three | Master's | 20 hr. | 2000 h. |

* from a TC recognized teacher training program

** with positive performance reviews



Recognized Teacher Training Program courses include...

- **Theory in practice** (linguistics; second language acquisition models)
- **Methodology** (lesson planning, curriculum/materials development, teaching techniques, assessment)
- **Professional issues** (resources, ethical conduct, classroom management, ongoing professional development)



TESL CANADA PLAR

- For applicants from programs that have not been recognized by (or have not applied for recognition from) TESL Canada.



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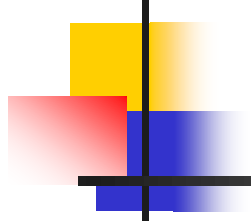
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Thank you!

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