

TESL NL NEWSLETTER

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December 2021 | Issue 2



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MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

DR. XUEMEI LI



Dear TESL NL members,

In a review of 2021, the pandemic-related issues seem to have dominated our lives -- the closures and reopenings of schools and workplaces, the vaccines, the heightened stresses... It is probably the worst year in a long time, but it is also the year our resilience and courage prevail. While we are getting ready to bid farewell to 2021 and hope for a better 2022, I find Emily Dickenson's lines most fitting: "Hope"

is the thing with feathers -
That
perches in the soul -
And
sings the tune without the words -
And
never stops - at all -

Let's keep our hopes high as we are faced with more uncertainties. Don't forget our postponed conference during February 18 -19, 2022 and submit a proposal. Regardless of the situation, our conference is a go. I wish you a wonderful Holiday season and a prosperous New Year!

A WEBINAR OVERVIEW ON AFGHAN EDUCATION

BY TINA ROWE

TESL NL Member & Elementary ESL Teacher

I participated in a webinar called "Educational Experiences of Afghans: Learning from Afghan Refugee Students & Families" offered by **Immigrant Connections** to further my own professional development as we are welcoming Afghans into our schools in Newfoundland and Labrador. The webinar was from the US and the host told us that the United States would accept over 50,000 refugees over the next couple of years and informed us further on the process of settlement in the country. Here in Canada, we are expecting a total of around 40,000. This is quite a significant number for us in Canada since back in 2016, about 25,000 Syrian refugees were brought into Canada.

The second part of the webinar was a panel discussion with some parents and students who settled in the U.S. since 2014. It was interesting to hear directly from Afghan families who had already been through the refugee experience some years ago and wanted to share their experiences so that teachers can do a better job in welcoming students in the future. I learned a little more about Afghan schools. Although I knew they had single-sex schools, I did not know that girls went to school in the AM and boys in the PM. Therefore students have significantly shorter school days than we do here.

I also learned that the school year extends from March to November in the cold areas and from September to June in the warmer regions of the country. Although boys could have male or female teachers, girls could only have female teachers.



All participants said that Afghans highly valued education, and we should have high expectations for the students, most of whom will be excited to be in school for the whole day. Parents want to be involved in their child's education, so the schools should find ways to engage with families as a whole. Parents spoke of the difficulty in helping their children with school work and reminded us that if we want parents to be involved, we need to explicitly show them what the expectations are and exactly how they can help. It is essential to provide students with positive experiences and believe that they can accomplish anything they can imagine doing.

One participant spoke of two different teachers she had, one who instilled a belief that she could be and do anything and another that told her the best she could hope for would be to find work at the local chicken farm. Another participant also spoke of the guilt of being in America while friends and other extended family members were facing a hard life in Afghanistan.

All in all, I am glad that I attended this webinar to hear from real Afghans who left their country and had been through the resettlement process. The webinar recording and slides, additional resources, are now available at this link below.



Online Professional Development | Immigrant Connections

We have partnered with English Learner Portal to provide online courses relevant to...

 ImmigrantConnections

SUGGESTED PD LINKS & RESOURCES FOR TESL

BY MARTHA TRAHEY
TESL NL Vice-President



Dear TESL NL members,

In TESL NL's October meeting, we reviewed some online PL resources relating to TESL, including resources on teaching ELLs in K-12 and teaching at the LINC level. We were also introduced to some recent resources on trauma and anti-racism.

We saw some collections of student voices and reviewed some available resources on Afghan culture, which are listed in a separate presentation. Both presentations are available on the TESL NL website. Hoping some of it may prove helpful in your work!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of you and your loved ones!

PL Resources for TESL

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR FREE ONLINE OR SYNCHRONOUS RESOURCES
FOR ESL-RELATED PL

TESL NL MEMBER PROFILE

BY SYEDA SABA TALATH

TESL NL Member

ABOUT ME

At the age of two, my love for teaching made my grandmother realize that I would be an educator. My parents were amazed, seeing my attempt to teach my newborn sibling the alphabets and phrases I had learned from my elders. After completing high school, I wanted to pursue my passion for becoming an educator and then I was admitted into an International University.

TEACHING ESL

My native language is Urdu, and English is a second language; though my parents gave me English schooling, it will not change the fact. I believe that 'language is a cable that swiftly connects any individual to the world around. This made me realize that if I could smoothen the surface of understanding for my learners, it would make their learning an easy process. Through M. Ed from MUN, I was able to lens the world of education more profoundly. In my teaching career from India to Saudi Arabia, now Canada, that too in a remote setting, I see an incredible shift in teaching-learning methodologies, curriculum, and more specifically, the shift in the education system from teacher-centred to learner-centred. Eventually, throughout, I have noticed that it is more about 'Socio-emotional learning.'

TEACHING IN REMOTE AREAS

While certain aspects of teaching in remote areas—like extreme temperatures and devastating social issues—are difficult, the impact you can have as an educator can truly make a difference in people's lives and inspire others to do the same. Below are a few of the reasons, why did I choose to teach in a remote area.

Teaching in a remote setting means enmeshing in the fabric of the community. Teaching in a remote area offers you the unique chance to become part of a tight-knit community. Further, a smaller class ratio has allowed me, get to know my students well, allowing students to pursue individual interests and guide them in the right direction. I believe, it helps to develop meaningful relationships with students.

Also, the most important thing I realized when teaching in a remote area is that most folks appreciate the fact that you're (teacher's presence) there, also, you are a new and respected part of the community. Eventually, you will become an important part of your students' lives—and the lives of their families and communities. Hence, I believe that we can inspire others too to embrace the nobility of the teaching profession.

