



COLLEGE ASSOCIATION FOR LANGUAGE AND LITERACY NEWSLETTER

www.callontario.org

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Fall 2018

We are a professional organization of college educators who teach language and literacy skills to students in the Ontario college system.



College faculty from across Ontario listen intently to guest speakers at the CALL Conference 2018, hosted by St. Clair College.



Centennial College, Progress Campus

CALL Conference 2019 Building Community

in our classrooms and beyond

May 29, 30, 31, 2019
hosted by Centennial College

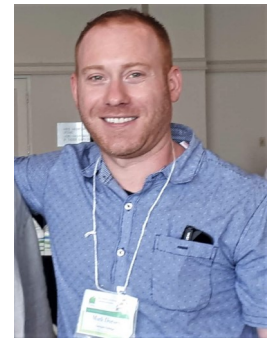
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A Message from the President

Mark Dorsey
Georgian College



Hello and welcome to the Fall 2018 edition of the CALL Newsletter.

I want to first take the time to thank those of you who attended the conference at St. Clair College in Windsor. It was a beautiful setting and relaxed atmosphere and there were so many amazing sessions devoted to the most pressing pedagogical issues that are facing Communications and ESL faculty members across the province. Kudos to Randy Hamelin and Heather Greene for their terrific work putting together the conference.

We are excited to build on the momentum of the last conference as we set about planning for our 2019 conference at Centennial College. From May 29-31, we will take over the entire eighth floor of the wonderful new Centennial College Event Centre. Our main focus this year will be devoted to discussing how to build community within our college Communication and ESL classrooms, and beyond.

We are also excited to welcome two keynote speakers this year: Rusul Alrubail and Dr. Sali Tagliamonte. Rusul Alrubail is the Executive Director of the Parkdale Centre for innovation, and a co-founder of The Writing Project, an organization dedicated to social journalism and helping people in the community express themselves through writing. Dr. Sali Tagliamonte is a professor at the University of Toronto. She has written numerous books about sociolinguistics, and last year she was awarded the Canada Research Chair in language variation and change. We are so privileged and honoured to have both of these community leaders join us this year as we explore the link between language, literacy, and community.

The theme of community is one that resonates particularly strong in the face of major changes happening in the current academic climate, within our classrooms, and in the world at large. In the spirit of community, we encourage you to invite at least one friend to the conference this year, to help recognize the importance of community in our personal relationships as well.

The CALL Board of Directors has experienced rapid change over the last couple of years but we are all excited to continue a long-standing tradition of collegiality amongst college language professors. Jack Wilson, who recently retired as a faculty member from Algonquin College, and who was a long-time board member and supporter of CALL, recently mailed me a few physical editions of the CALL Magazine from the 1990s. It was a nice bit of nostalgia and a reminder that the CALL organization has an important legacy dating back to the 1970s. This year we plan to build on the long-standing tradition of community that CALL has cultivated. I would encourage you to think about any small pieces of writing that you would like to share with our newsletter, which goes out twice a year. Even a small lesson, activity, or opinion piece can help build community and plant a seed to create change across the province. Thank you for allowing CALL to continue to be a part of your professional growth and development. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to say that we are all really looking forward to seeing you in May. For more information about our organization and to see the latest details of the upcoming conference planning, please visit us at www.callontario.org.

The CALL Newsletter publishes in the Spring and Fall each year. Do you have any ideas, thoughts, or reflections about teaching language and literacy in the Ontario college system? Contributions to the CALL Newsletter are welcome. Short articles (500-700 words), infographics, photos, etc., about best practices, classroom experiences, current academic issues, or other related topics can be sent to callontario.newsletter@gmail.com. For past issues, go to our website www.callontario.org.

2018 Conference Review: Identity and the College Professor

Randy Hamelin, St. Clair College, Thames Campus, Vice President, CALL

Heather Greene, St. Clair College, Windsor (South) Campus, Region One Representative CALL

Who are we? Who R U? Who M I? What is our role in 2018?

These are the questions we set out to answer during the CALL 2018 Conference, held in Windsor, Ontario, at St. Clair College's Centre for the Arts.

Like our theme for the 2018 conference, we college professors are forever adapting our identities and finding our place within communities and colleges with diverse needs.

The conference opened with Elder Mona Stonefish and traditional singer Lacey George sharing their family's journey and who they are as First Nations people of Southern Ontario. We were then honored with a blessing and a smudging ceremony to set us on the path to celebrating language, culture and literacy.

The first of our keynote speakers was award-winning journalist, poet, playwright, historian, editor and professor Marty Gervais. He spoke to us about the history of Windsor and how our geographical location affects our diction (spoken and written), and how historical roots provide a backdrop to our personal stories.



Keynote speaker, Marty Gervais, discusses the need to tell our personal stories.

Later that day, labour studies professor and longtime activist J.P. Hornick held an informative summary and discussion of the changing landscape of language and literacy in the college system, particularly during a strike year.

Throughout the three-day conference we began each morning with a run, walk, or yoga/meditation session along the scenic Detroit River and amongst the City of Windsor's riverfront sculpture garden. Then we proceeded to attend the fascinating teachings of our colleagues (and friends!) during the sixteen breakout sessions. We were impressed by the talent amongst our organization, and the diversity of topics and experiential opportunities, especially those that addressed pressing topics specific to our field: gender pronouns, code meshing, strategies for teaching trades students, or helping international students find success.

Our conference program was not just filled with growth and learning - we also enjoyed networking opportunities during the first-class meals. Evening entertainment, supported by musician and Algonquin professor Danielle Allard, included a panel of local authors who gave readings and held a book signing, as well as the musical stylings of Mike Karloff's Jazz Trio.

The impressive river and cityscape views offered by the Skyline Lounge at the St. Clair College Centre for the Arts provided the backdrop for the CALL Annual General Meeting. Elections were held to select new board members and fill the positions that will help our organization support college faculty in their work to promote new ideas and professionalism in the craft of teaching post-secondary language and literacy.

The organizers of the 2018 Conference give a hearty thanks to all of the hardworking volunteers, speakers, guests and participants who made this year's Conference a successful, inspiring and motivating experience. We look forward to seeing you all in Scarborough for our 2019 Conference!

Supporting our International Students: A Proposal for Student Success

*Paula Crooks, Conestoga College
Valerie Lapp, Durham College*

Success in international education often translates into a successful career. For that reason, young adults from around the world often look to Canada as a place where they can obtain a quality post-secondary education, improve their English, form friendships with a host of new people, and gain an internationally recognized credential.

One of the discussion groups at the 2018 CALL Conference focused on the recent influx of large numbers of international students to our colleges. The popularity of Canada's post-secondary system has meant that some colleges have doubled or tripled their international student enrolment in recent years, changing the demographics of both the campus and the individual classroom. While this has brought numerous joys and new experiences to the classroom, it has also led to numerous challenges for faculty. Communications, English, and composition professors are often on the front lines of support for students who struggle with a new language, academic culture and adjustment issues.

This paper brings forward a recommendation for a province-wide approach to address these concerns. First, though, here is a closer look at some of the concerns faculty are seeing:

Language Skills

Language skills are a particular area of concern. International student success is tied directly to the students' ability to read, write, speak, and understand English. While all international students must have passed an international English test in order to be accepted into an Ontario college, the students' ability to function in English varies widely.

Some colleges do English assessments of all incoming students (domestic and international); others do not. Those that do test will often direct weaker students into specialized ESL or 'extra help' sections of their communications courses, or will recommend that students spend a semester or two in the college's EAP program before entering the regular college program. While these strategies can

prove effective, they are inconsistent. Not all colleges test, and those that do may not force students to accept their recommendations.

Academic Culture

Another major concern was that many international students did not understand Canadian academic culture. Faculty noted that students lacked skills in research and documentation, did not understand citation and referencing protocols, and were unfamiliar with the concept of plagiarism. In fact, some faculty noted that traditional learning styles in many of the international students' home countries run directly counter to Canadian notions of plagiarism, so it is particularly difficult to address these concerns.



Britannica ImageQuest, 2018

Adjustment Issues

Faculty also pinpointed other issues that require attention:

- ⇒ Some students arrive in Canada only a day or two before their program start; a few arrive after the semester has already started. Culture shock, jet lag, and a very steep learning curve leave many students feeling overwhelmed and unable to cope in the first few weeks of the term.
- ⇒ Students sometimes rely on friends and electronic translators (phones and laptops) to understand the professor. This can disrupt a class with side conversations and adds to problems with academic integrity.

- ⇒ Academic culture and assessment methods differ greatly from country to country. Students who are used to doing short answer/multiple choice tests are unfamiliar with expectations of critical thinking assignments, presentations, and research.
- ⇒ Computer literacy is inconsistent. Some students were unfamiliar with word-processing, presentation software, or e-Learning platforms. Some had never submitted assignments electronically.

Proposed Solution

Faculty who attended the CALL Conference 2018 discussion group agreed that a consistent approach is needed across all colleges province-wide in order to address international student issues, particularly for those students whose first language is not English or French. Discussion participants agreed that attention needs to be focused up front—when the students first arrive in Canada. We should not wait until the students are struggling before we offer the kind of support they need to achieve success.

The CALL discussion group recommended that Ontario colleges develop a province-wide **mandatory orientation course** for international students whose first language is not English or French. The content and length should be consistent across all colleges, to ensure that students do not “shop” for colleges with less stringent requirements. Delivery styles, on the other hand could vary from college to college, from a 2-hour weekly class for the students’ first semester, to a 4-week course to be completed before the semester begins. Successful completion of this course would be required for entry to the college program (or entry to semester 2, if delivered in semester 1).

Some colleges already provide day-long or weekend-long prep seminars for international students; however, it was felt that much more time was needed in order for the information to be properly delivered, absorbed and applied.

This course should include:

- ⇒ A mandatory English test with referrals to ESL sections or EAP programs when appropriate.
- ⇒ Library use and academic research skills.

- ⇒ Computer literacy training, including use of a desktop computer, introduction to e-Learning platforms, and use of common word processing and presentation software.
- ⇒ Acclimatization to Western academic culture, including classroom culture, student/teacher dynamics, group work, presentations, critical thinking, and academic integrity.
- ⇒ Canadian life skills, including banking, grocery shopping, public transit, employment rights, and occupational health and safety (since many international students work while going to school).
- ⇒ Canadian culture and values, particularly concepts of diversity and equality, gender equality, and respect for all human rights.

We should also consider that some students could be exempt from the course based on a post-admission interview and/or test that covered all of these areas.

Faculty further recommend that international students registered in regular college programs (not EAP) should **arrive in Canada 4 weeks prior to the start of their program**. This would allow the students time to get over the jet lag and become acclimatized to Canadian life. This extra time might also be used for the mandatory prep course, so that it doesn’t interfere with the first semester schedule.

Going to college abroad should be a time of excitement and growth. As college faculty, our aim is to help international students achieve their goals and finish their chosen program successfully. The CALL Conference 2018 discussion group felt strongly that a coordinated, mandated training solution across all Ontario colleges will bring this aim closer to a fully achievable goal.



Britannica ImageQuest, 2018

From Writing Practice to Memoir in the Classroom: Synopsis of a Writing Workshop from the CALL Conference 2018

Randy Hamelin, St. Clair College

Teaching writing to students in a digital age can prove to be a daunting task. In my experience as an English and communications professor, I have found that if you provide quick and easy ways to exercise their writing “muscles”, you can achieve wonderful results.

One way to engage your students is to have them try practice writing. My first experience with practice writing came from author, painter, and teacher, Natalie Goldberg. Goldberg’s simple and practical approach to writing has inspired many since her landmark book *Writing Down the Bones*, was published in 1986.

Goldberg encourages students to separate the creator and the editor. In order to accomplish this, she has developed guidelines for writing practice:

1. Keep your hand moving.
2. Don’t cross out.
3. Don’t worry about spelling, punctuation, grammar or staying in the margins or lines.
4. Lose control.
5. Don’t think. Don’t get logical.
Go for the jugular!

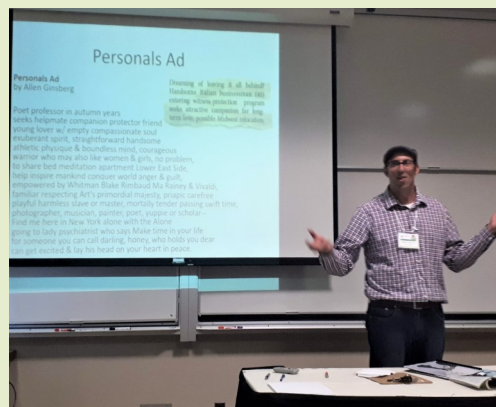
Each semester I introduce this concept to my students, and as a class we periodically engage in timed writing throughout the semester. We start with five-minute timed writing sessions and increase the length as we work through our semester together. Timed writing can be done as a way to clear the clutter of our minds and allow our ideas to ruminate and our thoughts to become clear and concise.

Some writing topics to get the mind moving are:

Begin with “I remember”
Choose a colour
First experiences
People in your life
Cities you visited or lived in
Sports or Hobbies
Everything you know about _____.

Additional writing activities that help develop our students’ writing skills regardless of the field they are studying are:

- ♦ Writing a five-minute memoir. Unlike an autobiography, a memoir is a snapshot of one of your life experiences. Write about: what you did in the last 24 hours, a relationship in your past, your first memory, a day in the life of you.
- ♦ You can use objects, a song, a picture, a poem or other stimuli to get the pen moving. Simply display the item and have students write for a set period of time.



Conference 2019: CALL for Proposals

Faculty are invited to submit proposals for presentations, panels, workshops, or discussion groups for the 2019 CALL Conference, May 29, 30, and 31 at Centennial College, Progress Campus, Scarborough.

We build community every day, in our classrooms, our offices, and our campuses. Collaboration, group work, outreach, and collegial comradery all help to create a vibrant, inclusive teaching and learning atmosphere. How do you build community in your classroom, office or campus?

This year's theme is

Building Community



Here are some themes you might want to consider:

- Building community when teaching online
- Building community through groupwork
- The role of community outreach in education
- Integrating international students into the community
- Capstone projects & community connections
- Building Indigenous content into the college classroom
- Reaching out to faculty in other programs
- Building our faculty community: Welcoming contract faculty to the team

Proposals should be 150-200 words, and should include the title, style/format, and length of presentation (45, 60, or 90 minutes), as well as a brief bio of the presenter(s). Also note any AV requirements. Upload your proposals [here](#) by **Monday, January 15, 2019**.

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Write a personals ad. Poet Allen Ginsberg wrote a Personals Ad in a New York newspaper with his real address attached to it.

Personals Ad

by Allen Ginsberg

Poet professor in autumn years seeks helpmate companion protector friend young lover w/ empty compassionate soul exuberant spirit, straight-forward handsome athletic physique & boundless mind, courageous warrior who may also like women & girls, no problem, to share bed meditation apartment Lower East Side, help inspire mankind conquer world anger & guilt, empowered by Whitman Blake Rimbaud Ma Rainey & Vivaldi, familiar respecting Art's primordial majesty, priapic carefree playful harmless slave or master, mortally tender passing swift time, photographer, musician, painter, poet, yuppie or scholar--

Find me here in New York alone with the Alone going to lady psychiatrist who says Make time in your life for someone you can call darling, honey, who holds you dear can get excited & lay his head on your heart in peace.-October 8, 1987

Sadly, he only had one response.

Our students' writing and our own writing can be enriched by engaging in other creative projects. Feed your writing life by creating art, painting, colouring, sculpting, dancing, knitting and even getting out into the world and just being. Find inspiration in nature and society through nature walks, going for runs, magazines, television, social media and other outlets that tap into our creative world.

Writing practice can give our students a new tool to engage their creative minds to produce stronger written assignments, essays, and reports, as well as to develop their professionalism in all areas of study and communication.

CALL Conference 2019: Featured Speakers

Dr. Sali Tagliamonte



U of T Professor, Linguist,
Author, Specialist in Language
Variation and Change

Rusul Alrubail



Author of *Digital Writing for English
Language Learners*, Director of the
Parkdale Centre for Innovation



Visit us at
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