Profits or Professionalism: Issues Facing the Professionalization of TESL in Canada

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When viewed through the lens of advertising or the Web (.com), TESL can seem like the wild west of the teaching profession. The free-market international context of the field is pressuring TESL to function as an industry, a role that can be in conflict with its goals as a profession. Some may claim that TESL is a **de facto** profession by virtue of being part of the teaching profession; yet, unlike K-12 education, which tends to be monitored and controlled by public stakeholders, the teaching of adult-ESL, EFL, and EIL (English as an international language) functions across an array of jurisdictions, contexts, and stakeholders, in which TESL becomes as much a private as a public sector activity. Accordingly, until recently, TESL has operated under limited state or professional monitoring within many sectors of its activities. Some may consider this free-market context as more inclusive to students and service providers alike, but it can jeopardize students' equitable access to high quality education, language, and opportunities. If the pursuit of profits rather than pedagogical outcomes dominates programming decisions, then TESL will remain burdened by a ambiguous professional status.

Against these commercialization trends are parallel efforts to professionalize the field. This paper offers an overview of some current challenges to this process of professionalization, as viewed through the lens of three key interrelated areas of professional activities: TESL professional associations; TESL professionals; and TESL education. Using these three categories as an organizational framework, we offer both research and reasoned reflection to contribute to the wider discussions of the ESL teaching community in Canada on how to improve the stature and quality of this rapidly expanding and changing field of educational activity.

A professional organization differs from other occupational associations. In contrast to unions or trade associations that organize to protect the rights, privileges, and interests of working members, optimally professional associations should safeguard the profession and the professional activity as a public good, even beyond the interests of individual members. Professional associations at their best represent the interests of all stakeholders rather than the exclusive interests of members. To this end, they are entrusted with defining and enforcing codes of ethics and conduct internally, even going so far as disciplining or expelling members. Externally, they are empowered to advocate on matters affecting the activities and conduct of the profession, even when such positions run counter to

the interests of individual members.

TESL as a Profession

In this section, we begin with the question: Is Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) a profession? The answer to this depends on the criteria used to define an activity as a profession. In the academy, recognized professional schools include Education, Law, Engineering, Business Management, Nursing, Medicine, Dentistry, Social Work, and Architecture. The professional faculties offer degree programs, many of them post-baccalaureate programs, which lead to certification by an outside regulatory body. It is essential for professionals in these fields to possess extensive specialized training, often in addition to more generalized study. In the general public, the term "profession" is used more cavalierly. A web search will produce categories as diverse as nannies, sales clerks, estheticians, hairstylists, dance therapists, real estate agents, financial planners, massage therapists, records clerks, and human resource managers as "professionals." In this sense, the word profession becomes synonymous with "a job that requires any amount of instruction," with or without an inside or outside regulatory or governing body.

The website for TESOL international, in the section about "TESOL the profession," does not really examine how or whether TESL is a profession; rather, there is an implicit assumption that TESL is a profession, illustrated by the following:

> the field of teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) is a professional activity that requires specialized training. The fact that someone speaks English as a native language does not by itself qualify that person to teach it, especially to those who are learning English as an additional language (www.TESOL.org, Feb 2004).

The explanation then examines various contexts for the profession. We posit that it is not enough to assume that TESL is a profession, but rather that we must initiate an immediate and ongoing discussion in an global forum about the actions we require to ensure ongoing credibility and legitimacy for ourselves, and more importantly, for our students. It is critical for us as professionals in TESL, in an era of accountability, that we define what a profession is and determine what marks TESL as a profession, and that we also consider the distinctions between the various descriptions which have been affixed to all forms of teaching: TESL as an art, TESL as a science, TESL as a calling, TESL as a field, and TESL as a profession. Each of these descriptions nuance our professional identities, our public roles, and our relationships to students, which in turn lend or limit legitimacy in our ongoing professionalization.

While the word profession generally implies (a) specialized pre-professional training and (b) a regulatory body responsible for

standards, ongoing professional development, codes of practice and professional ethics, and sanctions for misconduct or failure to adhere to established standards and norms, a field is where we practice, as well as an area of study. It is possible to be in the field of TESL without actually being a professional in the field; one can specialize in the field as an academic interest, one can be involved in credentialing or regulation, one can be involved in TESL as an employer, administrator, or business person, one can be an untrained volunteer, or, as is often the case in overseas EFL settings, one can be involved in TESL through missionary or humanitarian work. In the most obvious instance, practitioners of TESL who do not possess specialized training, who are employed merely by virtue of being native speakers of English, are "in the field" but should not be considered part of the profession. At the other end of the spectrum, two of the authors (MacPherson & Kouritzin) hold Ph.Ds in TESL, and would therefore consider themselves to be in the field of TESL, but we no longer belong to the TESL profession; we belong to the professoriate, a profession with a differing set of standards and allegiances, some of them actually in conflict with those of the TESL profession.[1] Hafernik, Messerschmitt, and Vandrick (2002), for instance, target their discussion of ethics in the field of TESL on the faculty/professoriate rather than on TESL professionals.

Is TESL then a profession? In the conventional use of the term, it certainly qualifies, TESL practitioners being at least as professionally legitimate as estheticians and nannies. Yet, if we use the term "profession" more exactly, comparing it to the fields established by the Canadian academy, the question of whether or not TESL is a profession is more ambiguous, namely, evidence of: (a) appropriately specialized pre-professional training in the academy which includes differential training for the various contexts of practice, and (b) a regulatory and governing body responsible for (c) standards and certification, codes of professional conduct, ongoing professional development, and sanctions for professional misconduct. This section will now look at part (c), that is, standards for professional certification and conduct.

In Canada, most adult ESL teachers are organized loosely under the TESL Canada umbrella, with member organizations from nine provinces (not Quebec) and the Yukon. ESL teachers in the K-12 system are organized under their provincial associations or unions, but often have membership in a TESL Canada affiliate as well. One provincial association, TESL Manitoba, is a member of the provincial K-S4 (K-12) teachers' union (MTS). Accordingly, TEAM (Teaching English to Adults of Manitoba) emerged to serve the specific needs of adult-ESL teachers and learners outside the K-S4 (K-12) public jurisdiction. Ontario (TESL Ontario) has twelve affiliates across the province serving as various urban or regional branches of their provincial organization, while Alberta (ATESL) has two, one in each of Edmonton and Calgary. TESL Canada, in turn, is a member of TESOL, which is an American and emerging international professional body. TESL Canada defines itself as "the national federation of

English as a Second Language teachers, learners and learner advocates" (www.tesl.ca, May 16, 2004). As a professional association, TESL Canada has taken the innovative step of including learners and learner advocates in its membership. At present, it is engaged in the development of TESL certification and TESL program accreditation standards for Canada.

The primary responsibility of a professional teachers association is to develop a professional ethos. This professional ethos may include the following:

1. **Principles**: the development of an explicit professional ethic
2. **Positions**: advocacy positions
3. **Professional development**: conferences; journals, publications, and on-line resources; and curriculum development and assessment support
4. **Community-building**: networking opportunities and activities
5. **Code of conduct**: a code of professional conduct based on the professional ethics, as well as self-monitoring and sanctioning the ethical conduct of member and changing guidelines based on changing circumstances
6. **Standards**: establishing national standards in TESL professional certification and education (program accreditation), and contributing significantly to the development of provincial and/or national research-based standards in ESL benchmarked assessment guidelines.

Principles: (i.e. Professional Ethics)

Professional Ethics

The responsibilities of professional organizations can be distilled down to the primary obligation to define the ethos of the profession. This requires far more than providing minimal rules for professional conduct; it calls for the establishment of a professional ethic to guide the activities and relations of the profession. The term **ethos** comes from the Greek term meaning "nature, disposition," and refers to the characteristic culture, attitudes, aspirations, customs, values and beliefs of a community. In the case of a professional ethos, there is a tension between the existence of an informal, descriptive ethos (what **is** done) and a formal, prescriptive ethos (what **should** be done). To formulate the latter, a professional ethos depends on a shared professional ethic that can serve as the arbiter for making such value judgements. Ethics move beyond considerations of method, morality or law; they frame our orientation to others, and in the case of professional ethics, our relations with students and colleagues in particular.

The error of many professional associations is to interpret professional ethics minimally as a code of professional conduct constrained primarily by laws or a set of norm-based prescriptive and proscriptive rules to govern the activities of the field. Yet, a

professional ethic is more than this; it is the defining prototype from which both a professional ethos and code of conduct and education can be constructed. In the case of medicine, for example, the professional ethic is articulated in the Hippocratic Oath. At root, a professional ethic is similar to the ethic underlying many religious and secular (human rights) discourses on ethics: that is, not harming and, where possible, actively promoting the well-being of others. In the case of the field of TESL, the "others" whose interests we strive to address and serve, above and beyond our own include learners, colleagues, and the public.

As Cornell (1992) suggests, ethics is not about learning and following rules, so much as it is about becoming a "kind of person." In this respect, professional ethics are best taught as part of a broader process of professional identity development. As Levinas (1982/1985, p. 95) suggests, all ethics involve assuming responsibility **for** the Other, but also the responsibilities **of** the Other, and in the process of striving to fulfill and ethic, we alter our sense of ourselves and our subjectivity; we transform our identity:

> I speak of responsibility as the essential, primary and fundamental structure of subjectivity. For I describe subjectivity in ethical terms. …The very node of the subjective is knotted in ethics understood as responsibility. I understand responsibility as responsibility for the Other, thus as responsibility for what is not my deed, or for what does not even matter to me; or which precisely does matter to me, is met by me as face.

In this respect, induction into a profession is about tranforming one's identity into the ethic and, ultimately, the ethos of the profession. A professional ethic that assumes responsibility for the needs and suffering of Others leads to a professional ethos of service, of responsibility for the welfare of others and of the public good, above and beyond a set of rules to be adopted or adhered to on threat of expulsion. The professional association is entrusted with inducting recruits into this professional ethos, or at least supporting institutional structures that can do so. Although a code of professional conduct (see below) may be an important means of realizing this ethical professional relationship, such a code should never be considered definitive or complete, short of the overall mandate to serve the interests and welfare of those we serve, in this case, multilingual ESL students, their communities, and ultimately, the public at large.

In questions about the public/private, non-profit/for-profit, or exclusive/inclusive nature of the profession, this fundamental service ethic is the standard by which we should address the issues, paradoxes, and conflicts in our personal and collective professional development. This ethic tells us that the primary consideration in our deliberations should be the quality of education we provide students, and the quality of students we in turn provide society or "the public." Yet, this logic serves those in the profession equally well by

recognizing that top-quality teachers, well-educated and skilled, caring, confident, and stable and secure in their own careers and livelihood are in the best interests of students and the public alike.

The increasingly international scope of our students, teachers, and programs requires that the TESL profession adopt an increasingly global perspective in considering our responsibility. Even if we convinced ourselves that our obligations were restricted to our immediate students and colleagues, we would soon find ourselves enmeshed in issues far from home. So, as Hafernik, Messerschmitt, and Vandrick (2002) suggest, the realization of a TESL professional ethic is ultimately about developing a commitment to social justice. They justify this, saying:

> … Surely a sense of social justice, a feeling of obligation to respect and help others in society, is the most ethical stance possible; it could be argued that social justice provides the underpinning for ethical decisions. What is social justice but an ethical relationship with and towards others? With the increasing prevalence of English as an international language, the work of teaching ESL is by its nature global, and attention should be paid to global issues, including those of social justice. (p. 5)

Advocacy

Advocacy is an explicit objective of the TESL Canada Association (www.tesl.ca). The target of such advocacy tends to be members, government and public policy, the media, general public, or various public educational or social institutions. TESL organizations engage in three broad areas of advocacy work: a) equity; b) diversity; c) lifelong learning.

Equity

Education in English (or French) as an official language of Canada is guaranteed in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. How this is interpreted vis-à-vis the amount of support offered newcomers and Indigenous students remains open to interpretation and varies across provinces. Professional advocacy in TESL in Canada often focuses on establishing the needs of ESL learners and levels of governmental support (provincial and federal) for ESL students, including resources, programs, curricula, placement, assessment, standards (e.g., CLB standards); and to provide workplace, credential recognition, or re-credentialing programs with ESL support. To promote greater equity for Aboriginal learners, there is a need to establish through research whether they speak English dialects, and if so, how to teach additive approaches to standard English as a second dialect (SESD). This is true for other speakers of non-standard dialects as well (e.g., Smitherman, 1998; Widdowson, 1993/4; Leung, Harris & Rampton, 1997).

Another target of TESL Advocacy are ESL teachers, whose issues might include job security, salaries and benefits, and parity with professionals with comparable skills, education, and background. As a strongly female-dominated profession, TESL's discrimination as a profession can be considered as part of a broader problem with gender discrimination in pay and in the workplace. Particular vulnerable are those teachers who work in community-based ESL programs that are neither publicly-funded nor unionized. These ESL teachers can face similar challenges to daycare and childcare workers in these respects.

Diversity

TESL organizations often advocate, support and promote diversity in learners, teachers, and programs (see www.tesol.org, www.tesl.ca). This entails explicit support for cultural and linguistic retention by establishing multilingual and multicultural outcomes for ESL education (e.g., Anzaldua, 1990; MacPherson, Turner, Khan, Hingley, Tigchelaar & Dustan, 2004). It involves developing guidelines to ensure that students face minimal risks of language loss (Kouritzin, 1999) and semilingualism (Romaine, 1994/2000) through exposure to English language education. Furthermore, this implies an advocacy stance against the misuse of ESL education for imperialistic or missionary (i.e., religious conversion) ends (e.g., Edge, 2003; Pennycook and Coutand-Marin, 2004).

In Canada in particular, we need to extend our professional advocacy, development, and networking to include First Nations' language education challenges, through documenting endangered Aboriginal languages (Norris, 1998) and developing Aboriginal language retention programs (Norris, 2004), through to establishing guidelines for teaching ESL/SESD as an additive process (Coelho, 2004). Furthermore, given the threat posed to global Indigenous linguistic diversity from the spread of EIL (English as an International Language), our advocacy needs to extend to understanding the link between linguistic, cultural, and biological diversity (MacPherson, 2003) in Canada and globally, that is, what Nettle and Romaine (2000) call biolinguistic diversity. Finally, we face the need to promote the healthy development of intercultural awareness and identity development in students and teachers alike. This includes ensuring that students face minimal risks of experiencing marginal encapsulation (Kim, 2001; Kim, Lujan, and Dixon, 1998a, 1998b; Bennett, 1993; Bennett, 1989; 1993) through language and intercultural contact.

Professional Development and Community Building

Advocacy, professional development, and community-building are reciprocal, overlapping responsibilities of a professional organization. Having established advocacy positions, it is necessary to advocate those positions, first to members in the form of professional development, and then to lobby those positions to

governments and other stakeholders through networking and activism. Professional TESL organizations offer formal and non-formal lifelong learning opportunities for learners and teachers alike. Part of this mandate is to encourage scholarships and PD support, as well as active and engaged forms of learner and teacher research that go beyond a preoccupation with method and include topics of social justice and advocacy, and call for the inclusion of multiple forms of representation (aesthetic and empirical) that can be read and appreciated by multiple audiences. This can be reflected in conferences, journals, publications, Web-based resources, and promotional materials.

One often-made critique of teachers in the K-12 school system is that they complete their pre-professional training, following which they are never required to engage in further study or in serious professional development to maintain their professional credentials. This would be unacceptable for doctors or nurses or other health professionals who must keep abreast of medical developments, for lawyers or judges who must practice current rather than outdated law, for engineers or architects who must take into account evolving building codes and newly-developed materials, for business managers who must understand changing local and global markets; therefore, it stands to reason that similar standards should be applied to TESL. Our knowledge of how language is learned and processed is constantly changing, as are our ideas of what forms of the English language are appropriate to teach. We are becoming more aware of cultural differences in teaching and learning, along with age-appropriate pedagogies. Our theories and principles are evolving and maturing. As professionals, we need to do likewise.

Code of Conduct

Drawing on various pre-existing ethical codes in the fields of TESL and Education, TESL Canada recently adopted a series of ethical guidelines for ESL professionals and their members vis-à-vis their relationships with students; colleagues; and the professional association (Appendix A). Codes of professional conduct are manifestations of a professional ethic within specific performance guidelines. Yet, they are also "instruments for persuasion both of members of (the) profession and the public. They enhance the sense of community among members, of belonging to a group with common values and a common mission" (Kultgen, 1988, pp. 212-213).

What is a Code of Conduct?

Codes of professional conduct are the responsibility of professional organizations that licence, govern, and regulate their members. In the same way that licencing implies qualifications, governing implies standards and codes of professional practice, and regulation implies the ability to investigate and discipline misconduct. A code of ethics, properly developed, will define acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, promote high standards of practice, provide

benchmarks for evaluation and maturity, and establish a framework of rights and responsibilities for professionals (www.ethicsweb.ca). Indeed, looking at a number of Codes of Professional Conduct/Ethics for teachers, as well as those for other professions, we found that most codes define (a) obligations to the client or student; (b) obligations to colleagues; (c) obligations to the general public; and (d) obligations to the profession itself.

Professional obligations to students concern fairness, respect, and truthfulness. Teachers must treat subject matter fairly, without suppression or distortion, and allowing access to varying points of view. They are to do no harm to their students, promoting well-being, safety, and equitable (not necessarily equal) treatment with respect to race, sex, age, sexual orientation, religion, colour, dis/ability, marital status, or national/ethnic origin. Teachers must maintain professional, non-exploitative, relationships with students, and respect confidentiality of student information except as required by law.

Obligations to professional colleagues concern respecting their values and opinions; sharing professional insights; giving recognition in published materials for their ideas; maintaining confidentiality unless disclosure serves the profession; cooperating with authorities regarding violations or misconduct; not criticizing a colleague in front of students unless required by legal or administrative hearing; not distorting evaluation of colleagues; not interfering with a colleague's participation in professional affairs; not using coercion or threats to influence professional decisions; and being professional in tone and manner. Interestingly, all codes of professional conduct that we found in all professions include the obligation for professionals to recruit, select, and accept positions only on the basis of personal preparedness, merit, and qualification, and to always use sound professional judgment.

Professional obligations to the public include teachers taking care to make a distinction between personal and professional viewpoints. Teachers must not misrepresent facts in either direct or indirect public domains, must exercise non-interference with colleagues' political or citizenship rights except as they infringe upon the profession, must not exploit the profession for promotion of political or partisan activities, must not accept gifts or bribes, must not commit felonies, must not commit immoral acts, and must not misuse public property.

Finally, professional obligations to the profession itself concern voluntary and other support in the activities of professional organizations; recognizing and representing the value of the profession and not making claims on behalf of a professional organization without its consent. It can include publishing research and materials that further that profession, and participating actively in the PD and other activities of local, national, and international professional organizations and affiliates.

As a global, international profession, sometimes associated with linguistic and intellectual imperialism, TESL must, we suggest, be particularly careful in defining a code of professional conduct that will encompass these professional rights and responsibilities. TESL will need to formulate ethical guidelines for responsible contributions to international development, as well as making responsible, ecological, professional judgments about innovative and effective pedagogical decisions which will not be detrimental to any nation's political, religious, or cultural mores. TESL will need to develop an ethic of human rights, especially as outlined in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (World Conference on Human Rights, June 25th, 1993) based on the principles entrenched in the Charter of the United Nations, with regard to civil, economic, social, cultural, and political rights. Finally, TESL will need to grapple with defining an ethic of gender, not only with regard to students, but also with regard to the increasing predominance of women in teaching in general[2], and TESL in particular.

Sanctions

At present, neither TESL Canada's code of conduct nor its standards are enforceable with meaningful sanctions. For example, the organization lacks the legal or political authority to invoke sanctions on those practicing TESL without proper qualification, or those who engage in professional misconduct. In contrast, teachers in the public K-12 school systems in Canada are responsible to professional organizations like the Colleges of Teachers and to duly elected school boards. The professionals, the profession, and the professional organizations are responsible to provincial Teaching Profession Acts and Education Acts. Layers of legally enforceable accountability exist in the teaching profession, and in other professions recognized by the Academy. Those adult-ESL professionals who are paid from a public purse should hold similar responsibilities for the public welfare as those teaching in public schools systems. Those TESL professionals employed by private institutions, at home or abroad, should hold responsibilities similar those of independent schools in Canada.

Abuses can, and do, occur. To cite two examples with which we are familiar: (1) a male teacher from the K-12 system who had been dismissed for conviction for a felony (aggravated sexual assault) chose to retrain as an ESL teacher of adults. He encountered no clauses on professional suitability, either while retraining, or when seeking certification, though he has been unsuccessful in retaining employment after being repeatedly hired; (2) a male dependent on the social welfare system because of recurring psychoses had his training as an ESL teacher paid for by the provincial government. Even though he threatened the life of the teacher educator in front of witnesses, he was not prevented from seeking education, certification, or employment, and completed his ESL education with an overseas contract in hand.

TESL Canada, like the College of Teachers, needs to be able to regulate TESL, pursuing disciplinary or legal action for infractions by its members, by institutions, or by those who would masquerade as part of the profession. Within the profession, nationally and internationally, means of discipline from reprimand, suspension, and expulsion, through to legal action need to be adopted. Perhaps we should consider a symbol for our profession, such as the nursing cap, the police officer's badge, the judge's gavel, or the engineer's iron ring, or even as mundane as a licence to be displayed publicly, which is a visible symbol of the profession, and which must be surrendered during an investigation, or after conviction for misconduct.

Professional Standards

ESL Teacher Certification Standards

Recently, TESL Canada has launched a national initiative to offer standardized TESL certificates to teachers of adult ESL, and a parallel accreditation initiative to recognize qualified TESL pre-professional education required for such certification. Some provincial TESL organization have their own standards. For example, TESL Ontario, ATESL, and BCTEAL all developed provincial certification standards, which have since been dropped by BCTEAL in favour of the national certification standards. In contrast, ATESL and TESL Ontario's certification standards persist and are even more stringent than TESL Canada's.

In TESL Canada, **certification** is the term generally used to refer to the process whereby an ESL teacher is recognized as a TESL professional; **accreditation** is a term used to refer to the process whereby a TESL professional education program is recognized to qualify students for subsequent certification. Both certification and accreditation standards focus on adult ESL because K-12 ESL programs are a provincial jurisdiction in Canada. In the K-12 system, TESL Canada certification is, by and large, insufficient; although the TESL specialist requirements vary and may be less than for the adult sector, all pre-service K-12 teachers have to be certified according to their provincial guidelines at their level (primary, elementary, middle years, or secondary), which involve 8 months to 4 years of professional education.

TESL Canada established standards for four levels of professional adult ESL teaching credentials (www.tesl.ca). At the time of writing, the first three levels are differentiated by the amount of experience rather than education; only the Level IV certification asks for additional education (graduate degree in TESL or related field). These standards and procedures are under review, and may change significantly in the coming months. At present, the guidelines are established for a basic TESL certificate, which requires a university degree with at least 100 hours of formal in-class instruction and participation and a 20-hour practicum. For Level II, teachers require an additional two years of full-time, supervised teaching. These

requirements have met with some resistance and bureaucratic challenges, but it is opening the way for greater mobility for teachers, greater standardization in teacher preparedness, and strengthening the salary and status potential of the profession overall.

TESL Program Accreditation Standards

In Canada, both private and public institutions offer TESL professional education, certificates, and diplomas that can be accredited by TESL Canada. The duration of the programs vary considerably (see Appendix B), and the prerequisites can range from high school diplomas with minimal TOEFL scores to university degrees with high standing and demonstrated native-speaker competency in English. Except for non-native English-speaking teachers of ESL, pre-professional programs do not require second language competency, despite the fact that Lange (1990) long ago identified this as the key requirement for developing reflective, responsible teachers (p. 248). Public TESL programs can be found in community colleges or universities. In the case of universities, programs are offered in professional faculties (e.g., Education and Applied Linguistics), but also commonly in non-academic programs offered through Faculties of Extension or Continuing Education.

Unlike the USA (Lange, 1990) where TESL tends to be located outside of Education in Departments of Linguistics or English, or in non-academic EFL programs, in Canada TESL programs are frequently situated in Faculties of Education. This has been a positive trend in Canada because, as Lange suggests, TESL education needs to include studies of non-linguistic contents such as curriculum theory, development, and implementation; pedagogical theories and practices; adult education; and evaluation and assessment. These offer teachers important knowledge on the practice, not just the theory, of their profession. In university Faculty of Education programs, though TESL certification programs often overlap with pre-service K-12 programs, they tend not to be encapsulated within them because of the high demand for adult ESL instructors. In Canada, distinctions between K-12 and adult ESL educational sectors are exaggerated by differences in governmental jurisdictions and certification requirements. These differences have generated, and continue to generate, heated debate about the best institutions or sites (academic or non-academic) to be entrusted with providing pre-service and in-service professional TESL education (Harrold, 1995).

In Canada, standards for certifying TESL professionals are inextricably bound up with the standards for accrediting TESL professional education. The process of accrediting TESL professional education programs requires close negotiations and networking with public and private educational institutions. TESL professional programs can be found in both private and public institutions, and with respect to the latter, in both Extension (non-credit) and academic (for-credit, degree- or diploma-granting) programs. Many professional programs go well beyond TESL Canada's minimum requirement of

100 hours (about 4-6 weeks) of in-class with a 20-hour practicum.

Conflicts persist between, on the one hand, universities and colleges that offer extended professional programs with academic credits, diplomas, and degrees, and, on the other hand, programs that only meet TESL Canada's minimal 4-6 week requirement with short, often for-profit programs (see Thomson, 2004). Some universities and colleges feel this discourages the professionalization of the field, since it does not offer sufficient rewards for more prolonged studies, except at the graduate level. So, it is not surprising to find that some of the major university TESL certificate, diploma, and M.Ed. programs, for example, have yet to apply for TESL Canada accreditation, leaving their graduates in limbo in their applications for TESL Canada certification (see Appendix C). Insofar as increasing numbers of employers are demanding such certification, the issue is in need of immediate attention.

As of January 2004, TESL Canada has accredited teacher training programs in 39 institutions across Canada (www.tesl.ca) (see Appendix A for summary)[3]. We researched these programs using information from their various websites, so if some details did not appear on the sites we have omitted them from the summaries. The types of programs vary from certificate programs to M.Ed programs, and are categorized as TESL, TEFL, TEFL/TESL and TESOL. The programs differ with respect to their requirements, duration, costs, programs, courses, and certificates.

Requirements or Selection Standards

The language requirements vary according to the programs. In our review of TESL accredited programs to date, 17 of the 36 institutions specifically call for some proof of English proficiency for non-native speaking (NNS) applicants; in most of these cases, a TOEFL score ranging from 500-600 (213-250) is required. This reflects a considerable range in English language competence. Furthermore, the remaining 19 programs do not appear to have any specific English competency requirements. A few programs also call for standard oral and written English ability for all applicants. This raises several critical questions. For example, what determines whether an applicant is a native or non-native speaker? How are native students' competencies determined, and what are the criteria for "standard English?"

One reason language competency and selection standards are important are that TESL certificate programs are being used by some international ESL students as advanced ESL classes and credentials. We have encountered ESL students who undergo TESL training with no intention of ever teaching. It is difficult to know the full extent of this trend, but it is worth watching. These students believe TESL certificates will enhance their opportunities for employment in businesses in their home countries requiring English-language

competence. Others simply use it as language training to develop proficiency. Some profit-oriented institutions encourage this misapplication of TESL education by marketing their ESL programs with the promise of graduation into a TESL certificate program. This is problematic in two ways: first, it encourages a de-valuation of the professional certificate (overseas at any rate), and second, it can lead to misperceptions on the part of ESL students as to the objectives of the programs. The recruitment of former ESL learners who aspire to teach into the TESL field is an asset to the profession, which is enriched by their participation as TESL professionals. Sorting out students with professional aspirations from those without is important to protect their full participation in the field.

The educational requirements of the programs vary. Although TESL Canada certificates require an undergraduate degree, some recognized programs admit applicants without degrees. According to the TESL Canada accreditation guidelines, these programs must notify all students with a letter in their application package and program literature that they cannot be certified without a degree. Although this flexibility can offer greater access and flexibility for applicants of diverse abilities and backgrounds and valuable occupational development for paraprofessionals such as TA's or volunteers, it also places them at risk. In our experiences working and learning (in one case) within such programs, those students without degrees do not understand the implications of their status. They do not have sufficient knowledge of the system to understand how reduced their job prospects are in Canada or internationally because they lack a degree. The notification is insufficient. Is there an assumption that these teachers will go overseas? If so, then why do we expect less of TEFL as TESL?

Courses

TESL Canada accreditation guidelines call for specific topics to be covered in the programs. These include: second language acquisition theory; linguistics (syntax, phonology, morphology); pedagogical theory; discourse analysis; sociolinguistics; TESL methodologies; intercultural awareness and communication; assessment; curriculum; lesson and unit planning; material analysis and development; task preparation. A practicum is required. Professional ethics are not required. The attention paid to multiculturalism and interculturalism is superficial and limited in most programs.

Programs

The accredited programs vary from programs affiliated with academic programs, to private commercial programs, to continuing and distance education programs. When profit drives or motivates professional education in any field there may be a serious potential threat to the profession in that this may encourage programs to be less discriminating in their admissions and certification standards. The

interests of profits will replace those of professionalism. Appendix C illustrates the findings of a Web-based survey of academic university TESL programs that are **not** yet accredited by TESL Canada. They constitute a significant percentage of the leading universities and TESL certificate, diploma, and graduate research institutions in Canada. It is difficult to determine why they are not accredited, but to our knowledge at least some have chosen not to apply.

One serious obstacle to bringing university academic programs on-side is the requirements that all TESL instructors in the program have at least Level III experience (minimal) with a graduate degree. Level III requires at least five years of ESL teaching and/or administration in an Adult ESL program. Many professors have experience in K-12 or both K-12 and Adult ESL contexts to serve their varied teacher candidates of academic programs. Also, many have more experience in TESL than ESL teaching and administration. Furthermore, insofar as ESL classes are non-academic at the university level, professors cannot easily alter their ESL teaching experience, even though they can accumulate significant TESL teaching and administration experience. In this way, the credentials for TESL instructors appear skewed to favour college or Extension ESL teachers, whose TESL programs are an outreach of ESL programming.

If the universities are not better accommodated by the professional standards movement in Canada, they could develop their own standards that could trump those of the rest of the field, creating serious divisions between university and college or non-academic certificates, similar to the case of Chartered Accountants / Certified General Accountants in the field of Accounting. One way to rectify this is to offer a special category of TESL Instructor to TESL Ph.D.s, which calls for a more flexible definition of applicable teaching and administration experience. After all, without TESL Ph.D.s, there can be not TESL M.A/M.Eds, as only people with doctorates can teach at the graduate level. Without TESL M.A.'s and M.Ed.s, there are not Level III or IV certificates. So, bringing the Ph.D. community on-side is an important piece to the professionalization puzzle. The university academic community may be partially to blame, as very few participate actively on the professional organizations, and so tend not to be represented on TESL standards committees.

Duration

The duration of each program varies from approximately four weeks to two years. The TESL programs in private institutions take a dramatically shorter time than those included in public certificate, diploma, or M.Ed. programs. The variation in the length of certification programs raises some interesting questions. It is a difficult task to equate a graduate from a one- or two-year long, full-time academic certificate, diploma, or graduate program with a teacher who completes a 4-week program. This helps to explain why so many

academic programs have not yet chosen to pursue professional accreditation in Canada (see Appendix C). Also, 160 hours in four weeks may be quite different than 160 hours spread over 4 months, where students are encouraged to take time to prepare more in-depth assignments and apply what they learn in practica throughout the period. Finally, professors with Ph.D.s in TESL or Applied Linguistics may have varied backgrounds that suit their broad research and teaching duties, which may not conform to the Level III requirements for teaching in professional TESL programs. It is important that the guidelines for academic programs be sufficiently flexible to include academic programs, especially those in universities.

Finally, an interesting phenomenon to note in Appendix B is that the type of certificate significantly affected the average duration of programs. Those programs offering TEFL/CELTA certificates averaged about 150 hours in duration, while those programs offering TESL/TESOL certificates averaged about 250 hours in duration. Some of the estimates were inexact when the program durations were not listed in hours. We excluded programs with combined TEFL/TESL, and considered CELTA programs 160 hours in duration (F/T for 4 weeks) while considering university programs listed in weeks only at 15 hours/week. This points to the need to distinguish two levels of certification based on the duration of programs (duration in hours reflecting shear volume and duration in months reflecting depth); however, the criteria should be sufficiently distinct to be meaningful in distinguishing levels of professional certification in the field. At present, TESL Canada recognizes all these programs equally; instead, two TESL program accreditation levels might be established: programs of 140-200 hours in duration over 1-4 months would qualify graduates for Level I and Level II TESL Canada certification; programs with 250-400 hours over 1-2 years would qualify graduates with Level III certification required to teach in TESL accredited programs.

Certificates

The significant variation in the duration of TEFL/CELTA and TESL/TESOL certificates suggest the programs offer differing levels of qualification and instruction. Clearly TESL/TESOL certificates are mobile for employment across international jurisdictions, but there may be more discrimination against TEFL/CELTA certificates when administrators hire within Canadian programs. In short, the use of these various certificates can be confusing (especially to those uninitiated in the field of TESL), and may be seen to suggest two tiers of professional standards: one for teaching English (ESL/ESOL) in Canada, and another for teaching English as an international or foreign language (EFL/EIL) internationally.

Costs

Tuitions vary depending on the program and the duration. Some programs require international students to pay a higher tuition than

resident students; most of these programs are public institutions, so the discriminatory policies may be justified because Canadian taxpayers and citizens subsidize their programs. Yet, even in public institutions, like ESL programs, the delivery of TESL programs can be highly profitable and used to subsidize other, less profitable programs. This is not necessarily problematic, so long as the interests of profits do not usurp those of professional standards in the delivery of the TESL programs.

Conclusion

TESL is a field in the process of professionalization. As TESL organizations in Canada struggle to gain professional stature for the field, market demands for ESL teachers in Canada and around the world increase exponentially. This creates a dilemma; whereas professionalization require making the field more difficult to access without specialized education and induction, this makes it difficult for individuals and programs to respond to short-term market demand fluctuations. Yet, at the same time, as the field becomes more exclusive, it becomes more attractive to high-quality candidates looking for more stable, secure, highly paid and respected employment. In this respect, the profit interests of TESL can be at odds with its interests as a profession. Professional guidelines need to be established through fair processes with grassroots' participation to help negotiate these competing demands in the best interest of our stakeholders, and in particular of our students. That is our professional responsibility. The challenge is to raise the bar, but slowly enough and with sufficient supports to assist all those diverse practitioners struggling to cross it. While it is ethical to make the profession more accessible because a diverse teaching force serves the interests of students and the public alike, it is ethical to close and stratify the profession through pre- and in-service education, standards, and certification because that will serve students and the public good as well.

If nothing else, in this paper, we, the authors, have pointed the way to some new research questions and direction relevant to TESL/TESL in Canada today:

1. Why have many universities not sought/been granted TESL Canada certification?
2. Have salaries improved for teachers with the various levels of certification as established by TESL Canada?
3. Are TESL Canada's ethical code and the process (sources) for establishing such a code sufficient, and what are the nature, status, and sanctions of this code?
4. How might graduate students in applied linguistics and TESL serve and be served better by provincial and federal TESL organization(s). And what about those whose experience, education, and prior learning differ from the TESL Canada (or provincial certifying bodies') descriptors? Who will conduct PLA's?

5. Do learners who study TESL over longer periods of time fare better than those who study the same number of hours but in an intensive mode?

6. How might the various bodies (provincial association, TESL Canada, university programs) work together?

Acknowledgements

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Appendix A: TESL Canada Ethical Guidelines (www.tesl.ca - Accessed May 04, 2005)

Ethical Guidelines for English as Second Language Professionals

The Teaching of English as Second Language Federation of Canada has generated a set of ethical guidelines to maintain the integrity of professionals and clients within its profession. These guidelines are designed to establish a standard of professional conduct Canada-wide and to assist practitioners within our profession to reflect upon the values and responsibilities central to their vocation as teachers.

In Relation to Students

- ESL practitioners commit to teach, research, and behave in a manner that respects the rights and privileges of individuals without the prejudice as to race, religious beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, physical characteristics ancestry, or place of origin
- ESL practitioners pledge to be receptive to different styles and approaches to teaching and to treat their students impartially

and with respect, bearing in mind their ongoing learning needs and abilities

- ESL practitioners resolve not to tutor or take remuneration for tutoring or providing assistance to students who are taking that subject in their class
- ESL practitioners commit not to use their professional roles to gain goods or services from students under their charge
- ESL practitioners will not have intimate personal relationships with the students who are under their tutelage or under their classroom instruction
- ESL practitioners will uphold the confidentiality of information provided by students unless as required by law, or deemed in the instructor's professional opinion, to be in the student's best interest
- ESL practitioners model ethical and respectful behaviour with students at all times both inside and outside the classroom.
- ESL practitioners respect the student/teacher privileged relationship in all their interactions with students.

In Relation to Colleagues

- ESL practitioners resolve to give credit to and determine authorship on the basis that all those, regardless of status, who have made a substantive and/or creative contribution are listed as authors
- ESL practitioners pledge to respect the rights of others to hold values and opinions different from their own
- ESL practitioners commit to contributing ideas, materials and resources to one another
- ESL practitioners resolve to model ethical behavior with co-workers and those they supervise

In Relation to the Profession

ESL practitioners accept the participation within the TESL Canada Federation as a professional responsibility and commit to:

- be reflective and self-critical in their practice
- conduct themselves in a manner which maintains the reputation of the profession and not jeopardize its public standing
- conduct research within the field in an ethical manner, and give authorship when and wherever it is due
- be aware of various power relationships and not use their professional roles for personal gain or fraudulent purposes
- seek and deliver professional development undertakings as much as possible with or without the explicit directive of their employers
- Support the profession by participating in and contributing to the activities of the local, provincial or national bodies by way of time and/or effort
- make presentations on behalf of the TESL Canada Federation

only with the written consent of its Executive

References/Sources:
ATESL ethical guidelines
Ethical Guidelines for Educational Developers
Ontario College of Teachers Ethical Standards for the
Teaching Profession
Ethical Standards of American Educational Research
Association

Appendix B: A summary of TESL Canada Accredited TESL/TEFL
Programs (from www.tesl.ca - Accessed March 2004)[3] (New window)

Appendix C: **Non-accredited TESL Programs in Universities in
Canada**

B.C

1. UBC
    a. TESL Diploma
        - Under Dept. of Language and Literacy
        - One year teaching experience required
        - 30 credits
    b. TESL Certificate
        - Under Dept. of Language and Literacy
        - 12 credits
    c. M.Ed in TESL
        - 2-3 years of teaching experience required
        - TOEFL 250(CBT)
        - 31 credit hours.
2. SFU
    a. Certificate in TESL Linguistics
        - Under Dept. of Linguistics
        - 10 required courses

Manitoba

1. University on Manitoba
    a. M.Ed. in TESL
        - TOEFL 550/213

Ontario

1. York University
    a. TESOL certificate
        - 30 credits
        - Undergraduate degree required
        - TOEFL 560/220

2. University of Western Ontario
   a. Certificate of TESL
      - Fee: $2,650
      - 24 weeks/280 hrs of instruction and 50 hour practicum
      - Undergraduate degree required
      - TOEFL 600
3. Brock University
   a. B.A in Applied Language Studies, TESL stream (4yrs)
   b. Certificate in TESL
      - Undergraduate degree required
      - Two-term university credit program
   c. M.A in TESL

Quebec

1. McGill University
   a. B.Ed TESL
      - 120 credits
   b. M.A in Second Language Education
2. Concordia University
   a. B.Ed TESL
      - 120 credits
   b. M.A in Applied Linguistics

Nova Scotia

1. St. Mary's University
   a. TESL certificate
   b. TESL diploma
      - undergraduate degree required
      - TOEFL 550/213

New Brunswick

1. UNB
   a. M.Ed in SL (Second Language) Education
   b. Diploma of Advanced Undergraduate Studies

Newfoundland

1. Memorial University
   a. Diploma in ESL

Endnotes

1. For example, in the Academy, colleagues are expected to publicly challenge one another, and call their professional judgments, their work, their theories, their knowledge bases and knowledge building

into question. It is expected that debates and disagreements will be aired in front of students and in front of other colleagues, and that the ensuing arguments will lead to greater understanding for the greater good.

2. In an analysis of the predominance of women in teaching, Wylie (2000) found that, in 1995, women made up more than 50% (and increasing) of the teaching profession in Canada, Greece, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, and more than 70% (and increasing) in the following countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, New Zealand, Portugal, and the United Kingdom.

3. Appedix B was collated as of March 2004 and revised in the spring of 2004; so, there are several programs listed on TESL Canada's current web list of accredited programs that are not listed in the Appendix (see www.tesl.ca).

- Ontario & Quebec: Canadian College of Educators, Global Village Toronto, St. John learning Centre Niagara Catholic District School Board
- Yukon: Yukon College (This is listed under Maritime Programs)
- B.C: Western Town College, ILSC Career College Vancouver
- Prairies: Mount Royal College Language Institute

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