

Editorial

**Carving Out an Epistemological Space:  
EAL Teaching and Learning as a Field of Inquiry**

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**Abstract**

The *BC TEAL Journal* continues to strengthen the field of English as an additional language (EAL) teaching and learning as a space for authors, reviewers, editors, and readers to come together in ways that underscore the knowledge creation, theory building, and educational innovation taking place in EAL teaching and learning in British Columbia and the wider world. Taking the time to define epistemology as it relates to EAL teaching and learning, this editorial outlines how the articles in the current issue of the journal support that space. There are five articles in this issue spanning post-secondary and adult contexts. With topics related to testing, teaching methods, lesson planning, comparative education, and literacy education, the value of the journal as a venue for the dissemination of new knowledge is much in evidence.

**From the Editor**

With the completion of the 2022 issue of the *BC TEAL Journal*, this publication continues to strengthen English as an additional language (EAL) teaching and learning as a distinct and robust field of scholarly inquiry and educational research. The strength of EAL teaching and learning as an academic field is evident from the thriving community of authors, reviewers, editors, and readers that have come together within these pages to grow and sustain a body of literature that underscores the knowledge creation, theory building, and educational innovation that is part and parcel of EAL teaching and learning in British Columbia and the wider world. Thus, the journal supports the endeavour of scholar-practitioners working in this field (Douglas, 2019) to carve out an epistemological space in the wider quest for human knowledge in which questions related to EAL teaching and learning can be asked and answers to those questions can be pursued and shared freely with the world.

Epistemology refers to “the nature of knowledge and the process by which knowledge is acquired and validated” (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2015, p. 574). It is the study of what knowledge is, how people know what they know, what different kinds of knowledge there are, and what methods facilitate the creation of new knowledge (Thomas, 2009). In the field of EAL teaching and learning, the theories that arise related to how people know something, whether that knowledge is reliable, how new knowledge should be created or found, what knowledge is worth knowing, and how that knowledge is best taught connect to, amongst other things, the subject matter in the classroom, the language skills students employ, the additional language learning process students undergo, the nature of language, the craft of teaching in general, and the professional knowledge of EAL teachers (Crookes, 2009).

Supporting the epistemological space related to EAL teaching and learning described above, the five articles in the current issue of the *BC TEAL Journal* span both post-secondary and adult education contexts. In the post-secondary context, the journal articles in this issue increase what is known about testing, teaching methods, and comparative education. In terms of testing, Steiger (2022) identified the benefits in-house English placement tests have over other large scale standardized tests when it comes to student success in level-appropriate English for academic purposes (EAP) courses. Next, Shoecraft, Martin, and Perris (2022) found that students in the EAP classroom can use comparative discourse analysis to develop their academic literacy skills. Finally, Corcoran, Williams, and Johnston (2022) examined EAL teaching and learning in post-secondary settings from a broad perspective, surveying EAP programs and practitioners to uncover a wide range of EAP program provision and practitioner concerns across Canada. In the adult education context, understandings of curriculum and materials development along with teaching methods are expanded with student success at the forefront. Huang's (2022) classroom practice article outlined an approach for teaching English for employment purposes for students with refugee experiences. Included in this article is a ready-to-use lesson plan based on the article's key ideas. Rounding off the 2022 issue, Penner, Abbott, and Lee (2022) described how EAL literacy instruction informed by self-regulated learning supports can lead to successful school-based learning, such as in the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) classroom.

Reflecting back on the past year, the value of the *BC TEAL Journal* is much in evidence. With an ever growing readership (over 60,400 abstract views since the journal started publication), a dedicated group of peer reviewers, and a devoted editorial team, the journal looks to continue welcoming readers, authors, and volunteers who care about research and scholarship related to EAL teaching and learning in British Columbia.

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