

INTRODUCTION

Wherever they are, teachers of ESL/EFL are constantly working to help their students understand and use English effectively. Their success in this ongoing task will depend on a number of factors including their own knowledge of ESL/EFL theory and practice, their ability to identify the real needs of students and finally, their skill at meeting these needs.

Increasingly, teachers are growing conscious of the learner's role in language learning—partly because of findings from language acquisition research, partly because of the trend toward negotiation in communicative language teaching, and partly because of increased sensitivity to the sociocultural variables which affect learners' individual motivation.

The twenty-three papers in this volume were selected from among the many submitted following TESL Canada and TESL Ontario's co-sponsored November TESL '85 conference in Toronto. Each paper focuses on one or more of the factors mentioned above. Together, they provide a picture of "Both Sides of the Desk: Roles and Responsibilities in ESL/EFL Teaching and Learning".

In "Research Related to ESL/EFL", contributors from across Canada describe research related to children and adults, literacy skills, teacher-student interaction and significantly, the often ill-defined relationship between research and teaching. In "Cultural Contexts of ESL/EFL", the focus is on the teacher's responsibilities in placing his or her teaching within the cultural context of the learner, or more accurately, within the context of the meeting-point between the culture of the teacher and the learner. "In the TESL/TEFL Classroom" shifts the focus to the various stages of the teaching process—needs analysis, assessment, program design, selecting priorities and fine-tuning.

In all, the contributors have answered many times over the question posed in the TESL '85 Ian Charles Gertsbain Memorial Lecture, "What's an ESL teacher good for?" It is our hope that the readers of this Special Issue of the *TESL Canada Journal* will better understand the roles and responsibilities of the ESL/EFL teacher, and will, as suggested in the opening article, be convinced that ". . . an ESL teacher is . . . good for at least another hundred years!"

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