

TESL Canada Journal
Call for Papers - Special Issue Winter 2027

Guest editors

Ibtissem Knouzi, York University
Penny Kinnear, OISE - University of Toronto
Merrill Swain, OISE - University of Toronto

Proposal deadline: February 01, 2026

Full paper deadline: June 15, 2026

Vygotskian sociocultural theory: Transforming L2 teaching, learning, assessment, and research

Vygotskian Sociocultural Theory (V-SCT), as a theory of mind, has had a major impact on second language (L2) theory and practice over the last four decades. It has challenged L2 educators' understanding of the genesis of L2 development and effective pedagogy through a set of principles (see Swain, Kinnear & Steinman (2015) for a comprehensive and accessible review) such as the central role of interpsychological mediation, and the focus on concept-based teaching and curriculum design. However, as L2 educators and researchers, often trained in cognitivist paradigms, redefine their roles and attempt to reconcile previous practices and beliefs with new concepts, many confusions persist (Knouzi, in press). These confusions exist especially with respect to key concepts such as ZPD vs. *i+1*; mediation vs. scaffolding; role of concept-based language instruction in form-focused instruction; role of affect vs. positive psychology; and Dynamic Assessment vs. proficiency testing.

This special issue seeks to explain key V-SCT concepts and demonstrate their relevance to L2 theory and practice in Canadian contexts, as demonstrated by Canadian scholars through conceptual papers and empirical studies.

We invite submissions that examine and critique L2 development, teaching, and assessment practices, and teacher education from a V-SCT perspective, addressing topics such as, but not limited to, the following:

- Role of mediation in learning and development, focusing on the range, affordances, and constraints of mediational means (including digital and multimodal) in L2 language classrooms.
- Role of language as a cognitive tool (e.g., languaging, collaborative dialogue, instructional interactions)
- Concept-based instruction in L2 classrooms and in teacher education programs
- Dialectic relation between affect and cognition
- Assessment
- Activity theory-informed analysis of learner/teacher development

Papers in English and French will be considered. We welcome papers for inclusion in one of three sections: "Full-Length Research Articles" (original research), "Perspectives" (theoretical explorations of relevant issues), and "In the Classroom" (pedagogical focus). Please refer to the TESL Canada Journal author guidelines for more information:

<http://www.teslcanadajournal.ca/index.php/tesl/about/submissions>

Interested authors are invited to submit a 400-word abstract (including references) to teslcanadajournal@tesl.ca by February 01, 2026. Please indicate clearly the category to which your abstract belongs. Notice of abstract acceptance will be emailed by March 01, 2026. Full manuscripts are due June 15, 2026, and will be subject to a rigorous blind review process. In line with SCT principles, we will follow a process that fosters collegial mediation and creates opportunities for scholarly development. In a two-phase process, each contributor will be asked to review a paper in the special issue (blind review). Following the first revisions and resubmission, all contributors will have the option to receive additional feedback through discussion at a meeting attended by SCT colleagues before submitting a final version. The special issue will be published in January-March, 2027.

If you have any questions or queries about this special issue, please contact Ibtissem Knouzi at iknouzi@yorku.ca