

Certification Outreach

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Early in the spring, the members of the Kingston twig invited me to talk to the group about certification. A week before the meeting, Adrienne Montgomerie, the twig's organizer, sent me a message about the questions I could expect:

"Cost of workbooks, cost of tests, how many times you can take a test, what resources are allowed in the test, time allotted ... I think most questions will be more general, such as 'Why?', 'What's this all about?', and 'How do I prepare adequately?'"

A tall order! On June 14, armed with my trusty laptop and PowerPoint presentation, I travelled from Mississauga to Kingston for a whirlwind visit—in and out in one day.

More than a dozen editors began the evening by meeting for dinner at Aroma, a local Kingston restaurant. After a delicious meal, we headed over to the Kingston Public Library. On the way, two editors asked me why I had decided to pursue certification. As I explained to them, and then to the whole group once we were settled in the meeting room, I fell into editing and wanted to prove to myself—and ultimately to my clients—that I knew what I was doing and had a certain skill level. There are many reasons to become certified, and each editor has her or his own reasons. EAC institutes the certification program to promote and

maintain high professional standards of editing, to help editors develop professionally, to enhance the status of editing as a profession, and to set objective standards for recognizing high levels of knowledge and skills.

After giving a brief overview of the certification program, I got into the nitty-gritty—how to prepare for the tests, what materials and resources you can bring into the tests, how to study for the tests, when and where the tests are held, costs, and how to know if you're ready to write the tests.

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The Kingston twig members were full of questions, eager to find out when they should begin preparing and what they could expect in the tests. (See the next page for answers to certification FAQs.)

The twig members were reassured to find out that they can become certified in only one area—they are not obligated to become certified in all four skill areas (proofreading, copy editing, stylistic editing, and structural editing). I gave an example of a colleague of mine who is a Certified Proofreader and who has not yet decided whether

to write the other tests. She has been contacted by potential clients because of her certification, just as I have been contacted by potential clients because of my certification.

The Kingston editors were also reassured to learn that they only have to pass one test to become certified in a skill area (before 2010, candidates had to pass a skill area test and the Elementary Knowledge of the Publishing Process test to be certified). This change to the certification program has many advantages: you can obtain a credential in one skill area by taking one test; publishing process skills and knowledge are addressed in the context of each skill area; and you pay one test fee rather than two fees to earn a credential.

We finished off the evening with more questions and a general discussion of how the members got into editing. The Kingston editors were so enthusiastic and positive it made me want to move to Kingston so I could be part of their group! Far too soon I had to head home—a three-hour drive. But it was definitely worth the trip.

Before I had even done my presentation in Kingston, the EAC Toronto branch program chair contacted me to see if I could make a presentation in October for the Toronto branch about certification. ☑