



2003
Fall Issue 8

English Language Services for
Adults – Service Provider Network

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Spring 2004: Contact
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Greetings from the ELSA Net Coordinator's Desk

Fall 2003 has been an active time for ELSA Net to say the least! Thank you to those of you who participated in our regional meetings and professional development opportunities.

We've also started work on our special project this year 'An ELSA Handbook for Literacy Instruction', - watch for results in spring 2004.

A special thanks to those of you who offered to write down some thoughts for this newsletter about the events you took part in. It is great to get such a variety of contributions to inform the larger community of what is happening. Also thanks to Salima Jethani, my excellent administrative assistant.

A new kind of challenge awaits me as I prepare for a year-long maternity leave beginning January of 2004. I heartily welcome Nina Karamehmedovic to the coordinator's desk, and am certain you are in good hands!

Brenda Lohrenz, ELSA Net Coordinator

Message from the President

Fall is such a busy time for all of us getting new classes up and running, but I trust that by now things have settled down a bit, and you can focus on what matters most – the ELSA learners – before Christmas and the need to do interim performance reporting in January roll around.

ELSA Net has also been very active with Regional Meetings held all over the province, a Board meeting in September, and successful professional development events, in the Lower Mainland, Surrey / Delta Fraser Valley, the North, and the Interior. Planning for the AGM and managing the Literacy Project have also kept Brenda, Salima and Board members busy. Hats off to all who give of their time, energy and ideas to further the goals of ELSANet!

A number of ELSA Net members attended the second National Settlement Conference held in Calgary. The conference was well-run, very intense, and brought together settlement workers and language instructors from sea to sea. It was interesting to see that concerns we have in BC about shrinking funds and increased demands to measure outcomes and be accountable are common in every province. The need for high – level language instruction for skilled and professional immigrants so that they can access the labour market and realize their potential was also a common theme.

As most of you know, Brenda Lohrenz is expecting her first child at the end of this year. We certainly wish her all the best! However, she will be missed greatly during her maternity leave. We welcome Nina Karamehmedovic who will replace her. Fortunately Brenda's new assistant Salima has already gotten her feet wet and will be able to provide support and assistance. Welcome Salima.

Alison Norman, ELSA Net President

ELSA Net Vancouver Island Regional Report

The past year has been busy and productive for Vancouver Island ELSA Net members. Two regional meetings were held which gave administrators the opportunity to share ideas and resources, successes and concerns related to the delivery of ELSA. As well, ELSA Instructors and Childminders had their own PD event, held in conjunction with our spring regional meeting.

This highly successful event was held in Victoria on March 14 and hosted by the Inter-Cultural Association. There were 38 participants, with representation from all six ELSA suppliers on the Island. Instructors attended a morning workshop by Jennifer Walsh-Marr on new teaching materials based on the Newcomer's Guide. An afternoon workshop, presented by Alison Norman, VCC ESL Vocational Department Head, focused on the new progress tests developed by Vancouver Community College. Childminders participated in a morning workshop on creative craft activities for pre-schoolers and an afternoon discussion on child guidance. We are currently planning another PD event to be held in conjunction with our spring regional meeting.

At our recent fall regional, hosted by Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society, participants listened to a very informative presentation on performance and outcomes measurement delivered by Patricio Ibarra, Program Design and Evaluation Analyst with MCAWS. They also took part in a focus group on identification of current practices, gaps and issues in language training as part of a review of ESL services currently being conducted by MCAWS and the Ministry of Advanced Education. To

assist the government in this review, an ESL Advisory Group has been formed, comprised of representatives from the public, private and non-profit sector, and Reena Taviss and Zena Simces have been contracted to conduct the first phase of the project, the collection and analysis of data. This will eventually lead to recommendations for the development of a provincial government plan for ESL delivery which will ensure long-term effective delivery of ESL services that meet client needs.

Through our regional meetings and special events, ELSA Net has facilitated communication among key stakeholders on Vancouver Island and contributed to a broader and deeper understanding of the settlement and language needs of new immigrants to our community. I would like to thank all Vancouver Island ELSA providers, our ELSA Net Coordinator, Brenda Lohrenz, and Ministry representatives for their participation and support during the past year.

*Liz Bloomfield
ELSA Net Regional Representative*

Reena Taviss collecting data from Vancouver Island regional representatives



PIPA Update Personal Information and Protection Act

On January 1, 2004 the Province of BC will enact legislation in response to a federal law that may affect individual organization standards relating to contracting and information collection. A brief explanation follows:

The Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, is scheduled to come into effect in 2004. Over the past year, the Ministry of Management Services consulted with more than 170 organizations, including small and large businesses, non-profit and professional organizations and advocacy groups. The organizations opted overwhelmingly for a made-in-B.C. solution rather than the more complicated federal act.

The Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) defines the kind of personal information that businesses, non-profit organizations and charities can collect from clients, customers, employees and volunteers, and sets out what can be done with that information. It provides citizens with more control over how their personal information is obtained and handled, while allowing B.C. businesses and agencies to collect, use and disclose information for legitimate business purposes.

To view the Act please access:
www.msar.gov.bc.ca/FOI POP

The following Implementation Tools are also available on the website:

- 10 Steps to Compliance
- Guidelines
- Best Practices
- Q&A
- Tips for the Privacy Officer
- Model Contract Language
- Model Privacy Code (soon)

NSCII and the National Network for LINC/ELSA/MIIP-ESL

Approximately 14 ELSA delegates including instructors, administrators, and an assessor from BC were chosen to attend the National Settlement Conference II held in Calgary from October 2-5. This was an excellent opportunity for the settlement sector in BC to give input and get information on what is happening across the country in terms of settlement services. Of particular note was the Language Interest Group session held on the first day – an opportunity to compare and share with other language providers from across the country. This was a well-attended session, which will be repeated with Canada-wide participation at the TESL Canada Conference National Network for LINC/ELSA/MIIP-ESL Providers symposium taking place on November 13th in Burnaby.

Thank you to all who applied to attend the conference. Delegate selection was done on the basis of including a cross-section of representation – frontline workers, administrators, regional representation – and took into account all those who were on the various conference working groups as well as selected BC presenters.

For more information on this project, see the TESL Canada website and scroll down to the network link provided on the homepage. Although federal funding of this initiative concludes at the end of November 2003, it is the hope of the project National Advisory Committee to continue on. Please join us at the symposium to discuss next steps. Also, if you could like to be involved in some capacity – contact eslnewcomernet@telus.net



Janet Massaro conducting the “Literacy in the Classroom” workshop at the ELSA Net PD October 20th.

Addressing the Needs of Literacy Students in our Classrooms

ESL teachers at all levels face the challenge of meeting the needs of literacy students (those with little or no reading or writing skills). The difficulty of effectively teaching literacy students within a regular class is ongoing. Alternatively, teachers must tackle the issue of different types of literacy needs within a designated 'literacy' class. Students who are illiterate in their first language may need to learn the basic skill of holding a pencil, whereas those who are literate in their first language can learn to read and write at a much faster pace. Teaching ESL literacy students can be an overwhelming challenge at times; however, to know that new Canadian research and development of resources are currently underway in the area of ESL literacy is encouraging.

The subject of ESL Literacy received national attention at the second National Settlement Conference held on October 2003, in Calgary, Alberta. Calgary's Bow

Valley College gave a presentation on some exciting research they have been conducting with literacy students since 1999. Initially, they did extensive research to identify who the literacy learners are and what they need. Based on their research, they developed a program of instruction, which includes course guides based on CLB 2000 ESL for Literacy Learners, teachers' orientation manuals, training sessions for teachers, development of assessment tools, and a resource binder available for purchase through their College. There was discussion about possibly developing literacy teacher training workshops that can be taught in local areas across the country.

In British Columbia, ELSA Net's ELSA literacy project is getting started and its goal is to research existing literacy resources (primarily Canadian), and to develop *A Handbook for ELSA Literacy Instruction*. The purpose of the handbook is to support ELSA teachers' ability to meet the needs of their literacy students, and to ensure that literacy student needs are addressed in either a literacy focused or multi-level environment.

It is exciting to see that through the research work being carried out in Alberta and BC's ELSA literacy initiative, ESL literacy is receiving well-deserved attention. These promising new resources, methodologies and teaching strategies will help teachers cope with the ever-present challenge of teaching ESL literacy students.

Shannon McDonald has been an ELSA teacher for Surrey-Delta Immigrant Services Society in Surrey BC, since 1998. She teaches a women's only ELSA literacy and ELSA 1 class and is advising on the ELSA Net Literacy Project.

What Kinds of Services do Newcomers Want?

At the National Settlement Conference workshop entitled "What Kinds of Services Do Newcomers Want?". Dr. Gillian Kerr and Anne Simard, of the Toronto-based consulting company Realworld Systems presented the results of a research project published in July, 2003. Realworld Systems reviewed the Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP) and the Newcomer Settlement Program with an emphasis on the types of services that immigrants and refugees value and want in Canada.

One of the key findings, after interviewing over 100 immigrants, revolved around expectations based on information obtained before the people arrived in Canada. Lack of information and disappointment regarding employment was the single most common complaint. They felt they were given inaccurate or inadequate information about the realities of finding any job in Canada, let alone a job that would match their experience and qualifications. They were disappointed because they believed they had been selected to immigrate because of the skills they offered yet, once in Canada, those skills were deemed insufficient.

The study found that over one-third of immigrants interviewed found some of the information on Canada on the Internet and some referred directly to the CIC website. The study proposed the CIC website present more information on employment and aid so the immigrants have a more realistic opinion of what to expect in Canada.

The study also looked at the role settlement agencies play in the immigrants' entry into Canadian society, as well as the level of service those agencies give. Immigrants wished for a better standard of service. Despite language barriers, they were aware when they were given incorrect advice or information and many of those interviewed felt that at times the knowledge and professionalism of settlement professionals could be better.

An interesting and informative study, the complete review and recommendations can be found at www.realworldsystems.net.

Krista Stovel, ELSA Instructor and Literacy Volunteer Coordinator, Okanagan University College, Revelstoke Centre

Notes from the Links

It was the middle of summer when I took over as researcher for the National Network website links. Everyone's tongues were hanging out from the heat and anyone with any sense had abandoned their desk and headed for the nearest patch of water. The question I sent into cyberspace, "Does anyone out there know of any settlement language related research?" bumped in vain against dark screens. There were some exceptions, however, as well as leads from the ELSA Net office, which in turn lead to others, and soon I was off into the labyrinth.

In my journey of exploration, I tried to focus on recent material which had a practical application for both teachers and administrators: papers on topics such as how long it takes ESL learners to become proficient in the language (*Benchmarking Adult Rates of Second Language Acquisition and Integration*), and how to deal with mental health issues in the classroom (*Mental Health and the ESL Classroom: A Guide for Teachers Working with Refugees*).

As both ESL instructor and language assessor, I have come across many professionals who have asked for information on getting accredited in Canada, so I was happy to find several sites and papers on the subject. Under "Topics of Interest," have a look at *Skills for Change* and *Qualification Recognition for New Canadians*.

Many of the TESL Canada Journal articles deal with topics outside the scope of settlement language; however, the list of abstracts provided on their site help locate the relevant ones. Not to be confused with the TESL Canada Journal site is the Internet TESL Journal based in Nagoya, Japan, which offers both classroom activities and articles with a practical application.

Although I've only gone a short distance in this journey of research, I have gained a new awareness of what is available across Canada in the field of settlement language and related topics. Take some time and explore the entire site at www.eslnewcomer.net. If you are an instructor, you may never get past the Instructional Resources section. If you do come up for air at some point, though, browse through the other sections. And please send any comments, suggestions, tips or ideas to us at eslnewcomernet@telus.net

Therese Neufeld, former ELSA instructor is currently an assessor at Western ESL Services and a researcher on the National Network Project.

MUSIC- IT SPEAKS FOR ITSELF

What can music mean in learning a new language? What can singing together, and music mean in the psycho-social development in people; specifically new immigrants? The answers to these questions, has inspired me to write this article. My name is Corine de Groot, I work for Chilliwack Community Services. I work at the Canadian Centre, Services for Immigrants and am the childcare supervisor for the ELSA program.

What I found out over many years of experience is that music and singing is a very important tool in learning a new language! Many children experience culture shock; sometimes they even suffer from some form of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I often find that background music from their own culture helps, but singing with each other is especially great! After repeating songs daily, children start to copy and recognize the same words when we speak to them.

At the Canadian Center, we initially sang with the children, then we found out that the adult students also liked singing together. It helped the students to understand and pronounce the words better, by listening to their own voice and to each other.

Why does music help people learn language? People who have lost the ability to speak due to stroke or other brain injury, can often 'reactivate' their speech center with 'melodic intonation therapy'. Often these people cannot speak words, and yet they can still sing songs that they know. This is because the area in the brain that governs music intonation and memory is located on the right side of the brain; whereas, the language learning center is located on the left hemisphere. The use of words in song can stimulate the re-learning of words in speech.

Music gives people a chance to be creative, to play with time, rhythm, and space. In addition, music is an extremely strong tool for allowing inner feelings to come out when other ways of expressing them are not possible. Music and language have been built around a common human need, communication..., and therefore are inextricably linked. Language can be learned through books, which is essential for obvious reasons, but language also wants to be learned through music.

*Corine de Groot
ELSA Childcare Program
Chilliwack BC*

*Corine also recommends the following website for more information on using music in the classroom:
www.iteslj.org/techniques/saricoban-songs*



Children playing while listening to music.



Instructors in Chilliwack learning to sing various songs.

Keynote Speaker Captivates

At the October 20th ELSA Net Regional PD Day, participants were entertained by the speech given by Bob Aitkin. Bob skillfully steered the audience through the myths and truths of brain research and how educators can use the implications of this work. The lecture packed an extensive amount of valuable information into a one-hour session.

Bob simplified the complex brain research by walking the audience through each section of the brain and by carefully explaining the function of that part. He then gave clear, learning-based examples for each function. Bob also covered the influence of natural chemicals (serotonin) and outside influences (stress) on the brain and its ability to function and learn.

Bob's comments on the Emotional Bank Account were interesting. He gave participants 6 steps to help lessen levels of stress. The steps can be applied to our work as teachers, childcare workers as well as co-workers.

The information from this lecture will help ESL teachers to understand the learner and learning. The combination of brain anatomy and function as it influences the learner was well presented by Bob Aitkin and appreciated by the participants.

Bob is presently working at VCC where he teaches courses for the Provincial Instructor Diploma and the Diploma in Adult Education. Bob has a Master's Degree in Education and will soon complete his doctorate at UBC.

Cari Ward, ELSA Instructor at Langley Family Services



Bob Aitkin, keynote speaker at the ELSA Net PD Day, talks to a participant after his captivating session.

Performance Measurement Framework Overview

Professional Development Session Provided by Patricio Ibarra, Program Design and Evaluation Analyst from the Settlement and Multiculturalism Branch of MCAWS

This framework covers the overall procedures and practice of ELSA program teachers and administrators regarding ways of measuring and reporting the impact of procedures and practices on ELSA clients. It is a loop involving input from teachers and administrators toward identifying program goals leading to activities in the school and classroom and involves the definition of intended outcomes and systematic measurement and reporting of actual outcomes.

The *OUTCOME REPORTING CHART* gives examples of ELSA Program Intended Outcomes and suggests methods for gathering or tracking information about actual outcomes, and providers are encouraged to adopt or create methods that they are comfortable with implementing. The question we as ELSA Providers should ask ourselves is; "What benefits do our clients take with them from our programs and, in turn, how can and do our clients go out and benefit their communities upon leaving the ELSA program?" Through measuring outcomes, ELSA providers can identify and focus on those things that are working well in their programs, and communicate these benefits to our funders. This is a demonstration of the importance of ELSA programs to newcomers in our province.

MCAWS is currently looking at developing a telephone survey of ELSA students who have graduated or left the program. Between 10,000 and 12,000 students will be contacted to extract 4,000 samples for determining successes and differences in service delivery among programs province-wide. The survey will consist of 20-30 questions and there will be "language support" available for participants with a low level of English ability. Participants will be asked for example, "Have you had a dispute with your landlord in Canada? If so, "How did you settle the dispute?" An advisory group will work with a consultant to design this survey which MCAWS hopes to have ready for implementation by the spring of next year.

Karen Miller, ELSA Coordinator Shane Global Village – Surrey/ Coquitlam

Settlement Services and Resources for Ethnic Communities

A Session facilitated by Lauren Johnson of BCSIWA and coordinated by Diana Smolic of Immigrant Services Society of BC

Do you sometimes wish for more background on the students that populate your ESL classroom? Do you wonder where to look when you have settlement-related questions? A panel of experts from the Settlement field addressed these questions and others in a presentation at the ELSA Net professional development day.

- Mambo Masinda from Mosaic stressed the importance of ELSA instructors provide the first impression that newcomers to Canada will carry with them into their communities for the rest of their lives.
- Goldy Bhatia from Surrey Delta Immigrant Services Society (SDISS) provided information about a range of services and programs for Immigrant men, women, seniors and youth such as abuse, drug & alcohol counselling, translation services, job search and employment counselling, income tax clinics.
- Shirley Tsang from S.U.C.C.E.S.S. provided information about services and programs through their organization such as the Chinese Helpline, Stop Smoking Hotline, Gambling Helpline, Business Development Training, Senior Adult Daycare in Chinatown, law clinics, Host Program, Business Development training.
- Sherman Chan from Mosaic stressed the importance of getting involved with an umbrella organization such as BCSIWA, ELSANET or TESL in order to help inform government policy affecting immigrants and to push forward progressive policy.

- Lauren Johnson, the facilitator of this session and Executive Coordinator from BCSIWA encouraged everyone to visit their website www.bcsiwa.com

Some of the notable messages from this group of experts were:

- The significance of the ESL teacher's role for newcomers; their experience in our classrooms and with us.
- A reminder that we should work together rather than take an isolationist approach. A "collective voice" is more effective.
- The biggest challenge and source of stress for newcomers, as well as the key factor in the integration process, is *learning English*. They identified the top needs following ESL, as employment, training for job skills and trades, and medical, social and recreational needs.

The services provided through settlement agencies are an excellent source of information for our classes. Make contact with settlement counselors in your area or use the BCSIWA website to assist in your information search. The strong message to ELSA teachers was "let's work together."

Kathryn Richards, Coordinator, Gladwin Language Centre, Abbotsford

Karen Miller, Coordinator, Shane Global Village Surrey / Coquitlam



The panel addressing resources for ethnic communities.

To Announce: The Adult Basic Education Conference & Annual General Meeting

Selkirk Community College Castlegar, British Columbia Thursday to Saturday, May 5th to 8th, 2004

Presented by the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C. Presenters: If you are interested in presenting at the conference or would like to recommend someone, please forward proposals before February 20, 2004 to Yvonne Chard at ABEABC, 5476 45th Ave., Delta, BC. V4K 1L4, F: 604-599-1786 or email: yvonne.chard@deltasd.bc.ca

A small honorarium of \$50 will be given for each workshop. Presenters wishing to attend other workshops must register for the conference. Presentations should be approximately one hour and 15 minutes in length. More details may be requested at a later time.

The Student-Centered Approach

A session presented by Andrea Richardson at the Lower Mainland Professional Development Day

“With your group, form yourselves into a sculpture, so to speak, that expresses your idea of student-centeredness.”

As Andrea Richardson moved away to give instructions to another group, eight pairs of shoes in ours formed a ring, all toes pointing inwards. And we, the people wearing those shoes, crossed arms, held hands and smiled at each other, to make a tight circle, focussed entirely on ourselves.

One of the kinetic methods Andrea used during a portion of her Student-Centered Approach workshop at the recent PD Session for ELSA Instructors, our “sculpture” was a way for us to get the literal look and feel of a class where the teacher is on the sideline.

Not everyone in the workshop felt comfortable with this pedagogical concept. By the end however, when all the participants had contributed to a brainstorming session on the pros and cons of the teaching style, we were coming to clear conclusions about the value of a student-centred classroom. At the very least, this was a workshop that showed through doing.

Earlier, Andrea raised a couple of issues, to get our thinking started, and highlighted teacher talk. “There’s usually too much of it in classrooms,” she observed, rattling a relatively inexperienced teacher in my group.

“Lots of times my students have questions about things they’re encountering in Canada,” the starting-out teacher said. “You know, telephone soliciting or carpet cleaning scams, things like that. So I’ll tell them what I know or I’ll go and find out and then we’ll talk but after I’ll realize there isn’t enough time left to do the grammar that’s on the curriculum and I’ll feel terrible.”

Andrea smiled when the teacher repeated her worry. “You’re on the right track,” she said. “Keep going, because you’re giving them what *they* want and need-- and it’s all happening in English.”

Kim Richards is an assistant coordinator/teacher in the ELSA evening program at Shane Global Village Surrey. Kim has taught ELSA with SGV since 1997.

Task Based Lesson Planning

This session was led by Brenda Storr, a Dean at Camosun College, Victoria

Brenda presented a really interesting and hands-on workshop discussing the development of lesson plans (based on CLB) that provide students with the skills to use language (or in the case of lower-level learners to create the foundation for the later use of language) in an authentic way both, inside and outside the classroom.

The goal of task-based learning is to provide students with the skills to move away from the classroom and function more independently within the community.

Teachers using task-based learning begin their lesson planning by determining what they want their students to be able to do at the end of the lesson. Lessons should focus on the needs of the students, their abilities, and the skills they are expected to acquire at their ELSA level (CLB). Teachers then determine the skills that their students need to learn in order to successfully perform these functions and tasks. Skills that need to be taught could include idioms, appropriate language, functions, clarification, the development of accuracy and fluency etc.

With respect to evaluation or testing, Brenda recommended that teachers explain clearly to the students what the expectations are, and how they will be evaluated. Testing can take on many forms - formal or informal, inside or outside the classroom. The skills tested can include the ability to read or write a passage, filling in a form, linguistic competence, effective communication, or fluency and accuracy etc.

Once the evaluation has been completed, teachers need to be clear with the students as to what they did successfully and what they can do in order to be more successful in the future.

Brenda Storr's workshop showed ELSA teachers how they can effectively use CLB through the development of task-based lessons that will allow their students to acquire and use real-world authentic language.

Karen Knott, Instructor at Coquitlam Continuing Education

