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Valuing Diversity: A Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Workshop for New Immigrants

By Jody Johnson

If you've taught an ELSA three class over the past three months, it is very likely that you've had a "Valuing Diversity" workshop delivered to your class. I am with the Burnaby School District's Adult and Continuing Education Division and have been on a tour giving workshops to ELSA and other ESL classes and immigrant support groups on the benefits of multiculturalism and offering tools for minimizing racism.

The workshop begins with a discussion of the complexity of culture and "what is Canada's vision of multiculturalism?" Participants are given a sense of the history of multiculturalism in Canada and of the rich

diversity of Canada's residents. A discussion of the benefits and challenges of multiculturalism leads to a discussion about stereotyping and its relationship to racism. The second half of the two-hour workshop is dedicated to discussing how to minimize stereotyping and racism. Anti-racism tools and ideas for increasing multicultural awareness and involvement are offered. The workshop ends with a discussion of the impact new immigrants have on shaping the identity of Canada. Each participant is given a workshop manual to take

away. The manual was written to meet the needs of ESL learners and provides key vocabulary related to the topics introduced.

It includes materials related to all workshop discussions as well as other information related to multiculturalism.

The workshop and its message are positive and empowering. The response from both the new immigrant participants as well as their facilitators has been excellent. Feedback has

indicated that participants find the opportunity to discuss these concepts enjoyable, meaningful, and useful; and the discussions related to stereotyping have been identified repeatedly as being especially powerful. Many participants expressed that they wished there had been more time for the workshop.



*Participants in Photo Novel Workshop at ICA-Victoria.
 See Page 4 for article by Laura Nimmons.*

These fifty workshops have been funded by the British Columbia Anti-Racism and Multiculturalism Program under the Settlement and Multiculturalism Division of the Ministry of Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism.

For those of you who didn't get a chance to book a workshop, I hope there will be further funding to provide more. If you are interested in booking a "Valuing Diversity" workshop in the future, please e-mail me at jody.johnson@shaw.ca.



Update from the Ministry

Results of the 2005 Outcomes and Client Satisfaction Survey for ELSA

By Patricio Ibarra, Program Design and Evaluation Analyst, Settlement and Multiculturalism Division

Background

The findings from the Settlement and Multiculturalism Division's 2005 Outcomes and Client Satisfaction Survey were recently distributed to service providers and other stakeholders.

The survey was conducted for the second year in a row to understand better how well ELSA and other settlement programs are meeting client needs. The ELSA survey focused on client outcomes related to English language acquisition, understanding of Canadian systems and culture, access and participation in the community, and confidence and ability to pursue a better life and plan for a future job or schooling. The survey also measured client satisfaction levels with the services and service providers.

Administration of the 2005 Survey

The survey was administered by a professional survey company, Synovate, in English and eight other languages over the phone between July 12 and August 8, 2005. A total of 932 respondents were drawn randomly from a total sample listing of 5,043 taken from the Ministry's Student Tracking and Reporting System (STaRS) database that records and tracks the participation of all ELSA students. The sample listing provided to Synovate reflected the number of students that were recorded as having exited ELSA between April 2004 and March 2005.

Major Findings

The 2005 survey results are consistent with the results of the first survey conducted in 2004. Here are some of the highlights:

Outcome of improved English: Virtually all ELSA clients reported that ELSA classes helped improve their English. Compared with last year, slightly fewer clients reported that the classes helped very much (38% currently versus 43% last year), while more reported that they helped somewhat (57% currently versus 52% last year). Unchanged from 2004, 74% of clients met the specific outcomes of improved English and said that ELSA classes generally improved their English.

Outcome of increased understanding of Canadian systems and culture: ELSA classes were credited with teaching clients more about the Canadian way of life (85% agreed this year; 82% last year). Consistent with 2004, the classes also gave clients a greater understanding of Canadian expectations for social behavior, more information about the cultures of other newcomers, and information on services available to help them live in Canada. There was an increase in the number of ELSA students who credited ELSA classes with helping them better understand Canadian and provincial laws (61% currently versus 56% last year).

Outcome of improved access and participation: 59% of ELSA students reported participating in at least three of four activities listed in the survey. While this was an increase over 2004's 44%, the increase was likely due to a change in criteria for this outcome (i.e. this year clients were asked if they had read English newspapers, watched English TV or listened to English radio, while last year they were asked if they had started a job or volunteered with people who spoke mostly English). The majority of clients reported that ELSA classes led them to read or watch media in English (83%) and use community centres, libraries, etc. (82%). The classes also led to 57% using English while working or volunteering and to 45% attending a social group or meeting where most people speak English.

Outcome of improved adjustment to life in Canada and pursuit of goals: In line with 2004, 91% of clients reported that the ELSA program has helped them with their lives in Canada and has assisted them with tasks such as using English in everyday life, preparing for schooling, or finding a better job.

Satisfaction with the services and service providers: Consistent with 2004, the majority of clients (68%) reported that they enjoyed the ELSA classes very much. As well, 94% said they would recommend the classes to others, which was significantly above the 2004 level of 88% recommending the classes. Also unchanged from last year, 61% of clients reported that they received a lot of support from the teachers and office staff at their respective service providers.

Suggestions made by the students surveyed about the program: The majority opinion among ELSA clients continued to be that the classes cover all that they should. If there are to be enhancements to the classes, clients most often requested more emphasis on conversational English (9%) and daily life (8%), with both these

ELSA Net Update from President & Coordinator

(Ministry Update cont'd)

suggestions being made by more clients this year compared with 2004. When it comes to improving the ELSA program or providing suggestions for service providers, clients most commonly asked for longer courses (12%), more levels of English (12%) and, again, more conversational English (10%).

In addition to meeting the Ministry's accountability needs under the *Agreement for Canada - British Columbia Co-operation on Immigration*, survey results will be extremely useful in informing program design and delivery discussions with service providers. They will be valuable in assisting the Ministry and ELSA providers to learn more about client satisfaction and performance outcomes on an aggregate and individual contract level in order to support continuous improvement of services. The use of client surveys to measure service outcomes is a pioneering activity in this service delivery area. Outcomes developed and refined at this stage are intended to provide baselines and norms for the future. The Ministry expects to conduct similar surveys every two years, with the next one scheduled for 2007.



President's Message

By Ming Berka

As you read all the exciting new events developing at ELSA Net in this newsletter, I would like you to know how hard Brenda has been working on our behalf amidst a flurry of emails, cyber-meetings and face-to-face meetings this winter. She has raised important issues in a timely manner, offered suggestions or alternatives (to save board member time), and guided us through a maze of decisions. The board has worked very hard this winter, but we wouldn't be where we are today if it hadn't been for Brenda's insight and hard work. On behalf of all ELSA members and the board, thank you Brenda.

Coordinator's Message

By Brenda Lohrenz

I enjoy being the bearer of good news – which has not always been the case in regards to significant changes that transpired in the sector over the last year and a half. Our board has regrouped however, and we were able to secure approval on a significant number of projects now in full swing. This includes our Directory of ESL Courses & Employment Programs for Immigrants in British Columbia – watch for an interactive database format coming to the ELSA Net website the end of this month. Plus, a number of smaller projects including a much anticipated STARS Users Manual, some resource dollars for ELSA provider sites, and a new look to our website. Results to come by the end of May!

On a more sombre note, we will soon be bidding farewell to Erika Del Carmen Fuchs our admin assistant extraordinaire here at ELSA Net. Good luck to Erika with upcoming travels to Mexico and Australia... Her enthusiasm and energy will be missed!



Nina Karamehmedovic, formerly of ELSA Net now of The Provincial Language Service, takes part in AMSSA's successful Multicultural Health Fair 2006 held Feb. 18 at Collingwood Neighborhood House.



Community Perspective

Using Photonovels with Immigrant and Refugee Women

By Laura Nimmon, University of Victoria

About a year ago, I was startled by an article in the *Globe and Mail* that discussed research findings by the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI, 2004). The article indicated that when immigrant and refugee women move to Canada their health is better than Canadian born women, but that it slowly deteriorates after they arrive, making them a highly vulnerable population in this country.

One hypothesis about their deterioration in health is that language barriers prevent them from accessing Canada's health care system and mainstream health information, which is normally written at a grade-nine reading level.

As an MA student in language and health literacy education at the University of Victoria, I was interested in literature research that focused on effective and ineffective ways to inform immigrant and refugee women about health information.

As a result, I found that using a participatory educational approach was most effective.

Using photonovels (formatted like comic books, but with photographs) as a tool to educate ESL-speaking immigrant and refugee women about health became particularly appealing to me because it uses learner involvement in the development of health materials. As a result of this participatory process, the scaffolding process takes effect and the women have an opportunity to draw on their own language knowledge, making content in the photonovels comprehensible to others of a similar language level. Finally, photonovels are also highly visual, which helps reach this audience that is not being accessed through other health education strategies.

My MA thesis was funded by BC TEAL's Charitable Foundation's Aids and Health Education Grant, and research for it took place this fall at the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria.

The women who attended the photonovel sessions collaboratively chose nutrition as their main health concern living in Canada. A public health nurse came to teach a lesson on nutrition and exercise. Afterwards, the women created a story line about eating well and developed characters for their story. They then took photographs (like acting stills) and posed for the photos. The story was compiled and dialogue was put into captions to make it look like a comic book.

Once it was printed, the women were very proud of their photonovel titled "From Junk Food to Healthy Living:

Tanya's Journey to a Better Life" (to view go to www.photonovel.ca) and they mentioned that it was both fun and educational, and that it helped build community and made them feel important. Although, the focus of the photonovel for my thesis project was "health" the photonovel technique can be used to educate ESL speakers about a variety of important issues.

Laura Nimmon is completing her MA thesis on the topic of using photonovels with ESL-speaking immigrant and refugee women. She is also an ESL teacher at the University of Victoria. If your organization is interested in a photonovel workshop or in-service workshops for staff on how to do photonovels you can e-mail Laura at laura@photonovel.ca. For more information and for examples of photonovels, view her website www.photonovel.ca.



Laura Nimmons & Photo Novel Workshop participants at ICA-Victoria

From Our Community of Service Providers

Cancer Prevention Education & ELSA Project

By Ming Berka, S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

The BC Cancer Agency and its partner, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Centre (Seattle), will conduct a research project on cancer prevention involving Chinese and Korean ELSA students in the Lower Mainland.

S.U.C.C.E.S.S. and Richmond Continuing Education sit on the Advisory Committee that began meeting in June 2005. These two ELSA providers, along with Immigrant Services Society, have hosted six focus groups of instructors and six focus groups of students, with ten participants in each group.

Before the curriculum was developed by Jennifer Walsh-Marr, three groups of ESL instructors were asked what they felt the most effective instructional techniques and activities to teach a health-related topic were (within three hours).

These three student focus groups were asked the same questions about how they would like to receive information on a health-related topic. The student focus groups were conducted in Mandarin and Cantonese (four and two groups, respectively). After the draft curriculum was developed, six different groups of ESL instructors and students were asked to evaluate the materials developed.

ELSA three instructors in the Lower Mainland will be asked to allow their students to participate in one of two cancer prevention lessons. A guest instructor will deliver the lessons during one of their regular ELSA classes. Participants will complete a baseline questionnaire to establish their health-related knowledge and behaviour before the lesson begins and a follow-up interview about six months after the lesson to measure their knowledge retention and behaviour change.

All instructors and students who participated in the focus groups were paid an honorarium, and students who participate in the study (that is, filling out the questionnaire and the follow up interview) will all be paid an honorarium.

If the curriculum is effective, the researchers hope to disseminate it to other cities in Canada and the United States where there is a high number of Chinese and/or Korean people.

If funding is available the project may be expanded to include other ethnic groups.

Coming to Canada

By Wenxia Zhu, Vancouver Formosa Academy ELSA student

When I decided to immigrate to Canada, I never realized how difficult my new life would be. After coming to Vancouver in 2004, I was worried about whether I would have a good life in Canada because I am not very young and I did not have any English skills. Fortunately, my husband encouraged me to start studying English. However, although I was always an excellent student in high school and university, I was not sure if my ability to learn English would still be strong after being away from school for twenty years.

Without any hesitation, I started my tough job of studying English. After taking the test that determined my English was at level one, I went to Vancouver Formosa Academy in March of 2004. Thanks to all the teachers' hard work I learned a lot about living in BC, Canadian history and culture, the environment of the country, social security, and so on. Also, I began learning pronunciation with my teachers and practiced teamwork in different studying groups. In the mean time, I studied English by myself at home and took other classes. In addition to reviewing the texts from school each day, I made a plan to read an English textbook that I had taken with me from China. I went to the Champlain branch of the Vancouver Public Library, and borrowed books and tapes for practicing listening at home. My English improved quickly. In fact, I was promoted to a higher-level class twice in seven months, and I could talk to other people in English a little bit.

Because I would like to continue with my professional goals in Canada, I have to take some programs at a university or college in addition to improving my English. At the beginning of this year, I went to BCIT to take upgrading courses. It is a really big jump for me to finish those hard courses. However, there is no shortcut I can take. I must continue to finish my homework, listen to conversations on the Internet, read articles in newspapers, and do my volunteer job at a seniors' home. And now, I am taking a basic health course at BCIT and an English course at the South Hill Education Center. Although there is still a lot of work I have to do, I am trying my best to succeed in my new life and goals in Canada.



From Our Community of Service Providers

ELSA Joins Community Hub Project

By April Neave, Chilliwack Community Services

In Chilliwack, the ELSA program occupied a stand-alone facility for over ten years. When it moved in September 2005, it became part of a multi-faceted downtown school-based project, Central Gateway for Families, which is in the process of building a mini “caring and learning community.”

Operating in Central Elementary Community School, the overarching goal of the project is to bring about positive social and economic development in the downtown community by building the capacity of families. It delivers programming that offers families, including ELSA graduates’, the opportunity to become involved in neighbourhood school-based programming long before their children are of school age. It capitalizes on the Canadian Pre-natal Nutrition Program which brings in families with babies, when parents are

most often open to support, and creates the opportunity for a supportive school-based experience. A number of programs are offered at no cost:

- Better Beginnings: support and education for pregnant women until their child reaches six months.
- Mother Goose: a group for parents and older babies to learn and delight in songs, rhymes and finger games.
- Families First: parent education and home support for families with children zero to twelve years.
- Summer Recreation Program: drop in recreation program for six to twelve year olds.
- Family Literacy: adult learning and parenting program that brings parents and children together.
- Child Enrichment: dedicated play environments for newborns to two year olds and three to five year olds.

Whenever possible, ELSA students are invited to join the participants of

these programs in collaborative projects and activities. They are invited to participate with the Central School staff and student population in community-building events and offer valuable settlement and adaptation experiences. Occasions such as Thanksgiving, Hallowe’en, Lunar New Year, and Multicultural Week offer unlimited possibilities for ELSA students to interact with others and share their skills and talents.

The long term goal of Chilliwack is that this “Central Gateway” model be replicated in other neighbourhoods and in other community schools. Only three months into its association with Central Gateway for Families, ELSA is establishing itself as a valuable addition and significant contributor to this community-building initiative.

For more information contact April Neave at Chilliwack Community Services 604.793.7242 or e-mail: neavea@comserv.bc.ca.

Learning English Helps Fulfill Dreams

By Baljinder Sidhu, ELSA student at SDISS

My name is Baljinder Sidhu. I am from India. I have been here for eight years. I have a small family.

I am in ELSA level three. My school name is Surrey-Delta Immigrant Services Society. It is not far from my house. There are twenty students in my class. One student is from Costa Rica, one is from Colombia, one is from the Philippines, one is from Malaysia, and sixteen students are from India. I like my class because it’s a multicultural class. We can talk in English and we learn a lot about other countries. Everybody is very friendly.

I want to study English because I can talk with anybody in English. I want to take other courses. It will

help me find a good job. I can enjoy my life and I can give good opportunities to my kids. I really want to get a good education because I want to fulfill my dreams.

I am taking English classes because they are free and there are evening classes. We can study after work. I think it’s good help for new immigrants. I am thankful to Canada that they give a free opportunity to immigrants. I am thankful to my teacher because her teaching methods are very good. She writes everything on the board and we can improve our writing skills. I am proud of Canada. I hope every country has the same education methods. Thanks Canada.

Regional News

Fraser Valley Professional Development Day 2006

By *Jaswinder Randhawa and Vicki Janzen, Abbotsford Community Services*

On February 17th, ELSA instructors from Abbotsford Community Services, Gladwin Language Centre, and Chilliwack Community Services participated in a joint professional development session. The ELSA instructors were treated to two excellent presenters: Maria Bos-Chan, ESL instructor and TESL practicum supervisor, and Rick Binder, ESL instructor, both from the University College of the Fraser Valley. It was a great opportunity to connect as a group, share some amazing food—always a highlight of any

ing the paperwork load for English teachers.

Rick Binder uses grammar workstations. The teacher sets up workstations of two to three students. Each workstation has a single focus: for example, one may only correct run-on sentences; another may check only for spelling errors. Readers at each workstation indicate problems they have noticed on an attached sheet of paper, post-it notes, or directly on a student's paper. They sign off each paper they have reviewed and then pass it on to the next workstation. At the end, all papers are returned to their authors for editing or revision.

that they were more conscientious about their initial writing activity knowing that their peers would be reviewing it. It was an excellent activity, which was well received and enjoyed by everyone.

Let's Get Them Talking

Maria Bos-Chan shared many fresh and practical ideas on how to get ESL learners talking more in the classroom. She drew on her extensive experience as a speaking/listening instructor and presented many techniques that she finds very successful. Some of these classroom activities include: story circles, impromptu speaking; mime and group skits, stress and rhythm practice, student debates, and many more. All the activities can be adapted to practice oral fluency, grammatical structure, pronunciation, or listening comprehension. She also suggested practical ways to adapt various activities to any level of learners. It is often a challenge for ESL teachers to get students interacting with one another, especially when the majority of students come from cultures where students are not expected to actively participate in the classroom. ELSA staff returned to their classes eager to try out the new ideas.



ELSA Instructors at Fraser Valley Professional Development Day

gathering—and leave the workshop feeling refreshed and energized with new ideas to practice in the classroom.

Peer Editing

“Students do most of the work, just the way they really ought to,” says Rick Binder. He discussed his innovative method of improving the writing of his students and making them more responsible for their own corrections and editing. This makes students better writers, truly engages them in the process, and also has the benefit of reduc-

This method of grammar stations is both simple and flexible. Teachers can pick and choose what grammatical areas they would like to focus on. This allows teachers to make the grammar stations very simple or more complex, depending on the levels and abilities of students.

I tried this activity in my level-three class. After a bit of practice, the students understood the process and expectations, and I observed how engaged and interested the students were in this activity. I also noticed



Maria and Rick: Pro D Facilitators



Regional News

BC Health Guide Program: Train-the-Trainer Workshops

By Betty Watson, Consultant for BC HealthGuide Program Train-the-Trainer workshops

The BC HealthGuide Program provides 24-hour health information and resources to help British Columbians make better health decisions. This program is provided by the Ministry of Health and endorsed by the British Columbia Medical Association, the British Columbia College of Family Physicians, the College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia, and the College of Pharmacists of British Columbia.

In October 2005, ELSA Net members were invited to participate in the BC HealthGuide Program Train-the-Trainer workshops. The workshops were designed to prepare and train instructors to present the BC HealthGuide Program to their students and enable them to make full use of all four program components in delivering their health unit and computer lab programming. Participants were provided with the BC HealthGuide Workshop Facilitator's Binder—a comprehensive set of resource materials including scripts, overheads, and activities for the classroom.

In total, nine BC HealthGuide Train-the-trainer workshops have been scheduled. In January 2006, twenty-four ELSA/ESL instructors from the following organizations and agencies participated in the workshops: Victoria Refugee and Immigrant Society, Abbotsford Community Services, Gladwin Language Centre, New Directions (Langley), Vancouver Immigrant Services Society, S.U.C.C.E.S.S., Excel Education Centre (Richmond), and the Richmond School Board. The workshops were held in Victoria, Abbotsford, Burnaby, and Richmond. Five more workshops took place in Courtenay, Kelowna, Penticton, Revelstoke, and Vancouver in February. Participants

included instructors from North Island College, Campbell River and Area Multicultural and Immigrant Services Association, Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society, Kelowna Community Resources, Vernon and District Immigrant Services Society, Penticton and District Multicultural Society, Okanagan College Revelstoke Centre, Pacific Immigrant Resources Society, and many of Vancouver's Neighbourhood Houses.

At the end of the workshop, instructors were enthusiastic about the comprehensiveness and reliability of the BC HealthGuide Program and its resources. They were also interested in the benefits for students in managing health risks and conditions, empowering them and increasing confidence in practicing self-care.

The BC HealthGuide Program appreciates the positive response and ongoing support from members of ELSA Net in providing students with information on these valuable health resources.





May is celebrated as Asian Heritage Month throughout North America.

The Vancouver Asian Heritage Month Society coordinates performance and educational events during Asian Heritage Month in May and the rest of the year under the banner of explorASIAN. Some of these events are produced by VAHMS as well as in collaboration with other arts, cultural, and community organizations and educational institutions.

For more information, go to www.explorasian.org.

From Our Classroom to Yours

Reviewing Body Parts the Cooperative Learning Way

By Nancy Callan, Vancouver Formosa Academy

Here is a fun activity for reviewing body parts that goes over well. I divide the class into groups of three and give each group a sheet of chart paper and a thick marker. I ask the students to take turns being the artist.

The students are instructed to write no English on the paper. Only drawings should be on the paper. Students are instructed not to draw a whole person, but rather each body part separately as it is called out. Whether the class is an "English only" class or a lower level class that allows communication in a first language, this particular activity is identified as "English only."

I then call out thirty body parts. The first one is something easy like "nose" and then I move on to more challenging ones like "navel". "Bum" is a fun one for students to draw. It's a great activity for shaking up the atmosphere of the class. Students often get up out of their chairs, lean over the paper, and offer opinions on how to draw each part. A lot of laughter is the inevitable outcome.

When the last body part has been drawn, I collect the felt markers and ask each group to take out one ballpoint pen. The chart paper is then passed to the neighbouring group, moving clockwise. This is the labelling stage of the activity. Each group is to label the body parts on the other groups' paper, without the aid of dictionaries or reference to class handouts. A lot more laughter ensues as groups try to make out what the drawings are meant to be.

After a short interval, time is up and the groups must pass the chart paper to the next group to finish labelling any unlabelled parts. This is also the correction stage. Groups must correct any of the previous group's spelling or labelling errors. After another brief interval, the paper is passed on again. When groups finally get their own paper back, they check whether the other groups correctly labelled their body parts. Papers can then be hung on the walls.

It is said that students need to see a new word eight times in order to make it part of their active vocabulary. There are many ways to review body parts vocabulary and this fun, cooperative learning activity puts students in a receptive mode for learning. It integrates listening, speaking, writing and reading, and encourages them to focus on their spelling accuracy.

Elena's Story

By Elena Kovacs, student at New Directions-Langley

My name is Elena Kovacs. I am from Romania. I married a Romanian man in my country on December 3, 2004. We are expecting our first born in July.

I arrived in Canada on July 19, 2005. After ten days, I had a test in Surrey and on August 2, 2005, I started studying English at New Directions in Langley.

I am nicely surprised that every day I can understand more and more. When I don't understand something my teacher, Carol, stops and shows me the meaning in other ways.

On my first day I was worried and uncomfortable. I was confused because I felt that everybody knew more than I did. They had started to study before me. Aurelio (another student) talked with me at lunch about his country, Mexico, and asked about my country. He said in Mexico the people are very, very happy always and I saw how beautiful it is to talk with other people when we don't speak and understand each other's language. We try to speak in English and we try to show with our face, head, and hands what we would like to say. My husband is a truck driver. He is away for long periods of time, but this school with teachers and students is my second family.

I will never forget all the nice time we spend together: we study, play, and laugh together and we go on picnics and many field trips together. When I had personal problems everybody helped and encouraged me. When I was in hospital, my teachers, Carol and Joanne, called me to ask if I needed anything, because they wanted to know if everything was okay. It was very nice to feel I am an important person to them.



Elena with a friend



From Our Classroom to Yours

My Tour of the Fire Hall

By Natalia Belinskaya, student at New Directions Langley

In January, the lessons on fire safety that level one-three students from New Directions, Langley, had enjoyed, were followed up by a visit to a brand-new fire hall in Langley City. Here is a report from one of our students:

Last Tuesday, January 24th, we went to the fire hall. It was the first tour of a fire hall in my life! That fire hall is located in Langley. There are twenty-five firefighters and about twenty-four volunteers. We met two firefighters. Their names are Ron and Bob. They showed us an interesting movie about what we should do if a fire happens in our home. After the movie we

started our tour of the Hall. We saw a room where the firefighters dry their gear. Ron and Bob's gear wasn't there. Their gear was in the fire truck because they should be ready if someone calls 9-1-1. Then we went to see

more fire trucks. I saw four trucks. I sat in the fire truck and tried to feel like a firefighter. Finally we visited the museum of the fire hall. There was a fire truck which was made in 1959. I also saw a lot of pictures and prizes there that firefighters got for their competitions. During this exciting tour I took some cute photos and received a lot of useful and interesting information.



ELSA Net Overview

English Language Services for Adults (ELSA) is a funding stream of the British Columbia Settlement and Adaptation Program. ELSA Net is a society of ELSA Service Providers, which consists of organizations such as settlement agencies (non-profit organizations), community and university colleges, school board continuing education departments, and private schools offering ELSA Programs.

The purpose of ELSA Net is to facilitate the effective delivery of English Language Services for Adults throughout the Province of British Columbia taking into account and recognizing regional differences and needs.

The objectives of ELSA Net are to carry out the following functions to assist in attaining the purpose of ELSA Net:

- (a) Recommend policies and procedures to the Ministry (Ministry of the Attorney General) regarding ELSA;
- (b) Provide a forum for networking by Members;
- (c) Provide professional development opportunities for employees of the Members;
- (d) Promote program research and development;
- (e) Establish and maintain an effective structure for communication and coordination among Members;
- (f) Provide representation of and information about ELSA and ELSA Net at the local, provincial and national level; and
- (g) Provide advice to the Ministry regarding ELSA.

New Resources For the Classroom

Book Review: *Canadian Snapshots*, Pearson Longman

By Joan Berndt, in consultation with Leona Thiessen and Phil Sherwood, ELSA 3 teachers—Gladwin Language Centre

Canadian Snapshots: Linking to the Community (Pearson, Longman) can be a welcome addition to ESL level three resources.

The strength of the publication lies in its ties to both CLB and ELSA (BC) level three themes. The text is divided into community themes such as Classroom, Library, Health, Employment, and Consumer needs—all relevant themes for provincial ESL programs that focus on helping immigrants learn English necessary for participation in our English speaking communities.

Canadian Snapshots reflects research by the authors on the importance of developing language functions rather than indiscriminate grammatical, writing, or reading topics. It employs all the skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing and provides a detailed scopes overview. A welcome inclusion is the stress on “language chunks” rather than individual words. The student workbook includes student self-evaluation exercises, and the extension activities suggested in this resource make good suggestions for using the newly developed skill in authentic situations. An additional bonus of the workbook is the pronunciation exercises and tips to help students learn correct sounds, intonations, and stresses. The listening CD is clearly spoken and easy to understand, providing additional practice with a unit’s language skills. Finally, for those able to access the Internet, there is a companion site for additional practice, as well as a suggested teacher’s unit plan.

The course book does not rely on the Internet companion site, but views it as additional practice which is important, as some students and schools may have limited computer resources.

The course book would be a welcome addition as it provides a backbone to the curriculum of CLB level three ESL courses such as ELSA.

The course book has limitations, however. Although it provides a mix of individual, partner, and group activi-

ties, it could provide a more varied approach with its strategies by including info gaps, clozes, and the like. In addition, the book provides excellent explanations of certain grammatical concepts in visual and chart forms, yet makes assumptions about others. For example, many students who enter level three do not know the grammatical terms of *subject* or *object*, and for that matter may need to review the term *verb*; yet the book assumes the students have this prior knowledge. Finally, the book’s themes are limited, and presented in a somewhat disjointed fashion.

For example, the book presents the chapter, “Going to the Doctor,” then “In the Supermarket,” then returns to the medical topic with “Reporting a Medical Emergency,” and then back to consumerism with the chapter, “Dealing with Consumer Problems.” This fragmented approach occurs also with the employment and lifelong learning chapters.

Thematically, the book really only focuses on three areas: basic consumer information, basic medical information, and basic employment/learning. Not questioning the legitimacy of these themes, however, one wonders why themes such as banking, health care systems, the legal system, family violence/abuse, substance abuse issues, and basic citizenship are not included.

On a final note, the presentation of the material is not ideal. Although the charts and highlighting are excellent, the colour scheme chosen is not attractive and in some cases difficult to read.

For those with limited vision, blue on blue is not easy to read. Also, in the student book some pages are too full of writing or quite crowded, which can be overwhelming for students. Perhaps combining the workbook and student book into one would help to disburse the writing with pictures/charts, addressing the need to reduce the busyness of some of the pages. Finally, for those ESL schools on limited budgets, this may be a more affordable option than purchasing two separate student resources.



Canadian Snapshots book and snapshot of companion website



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