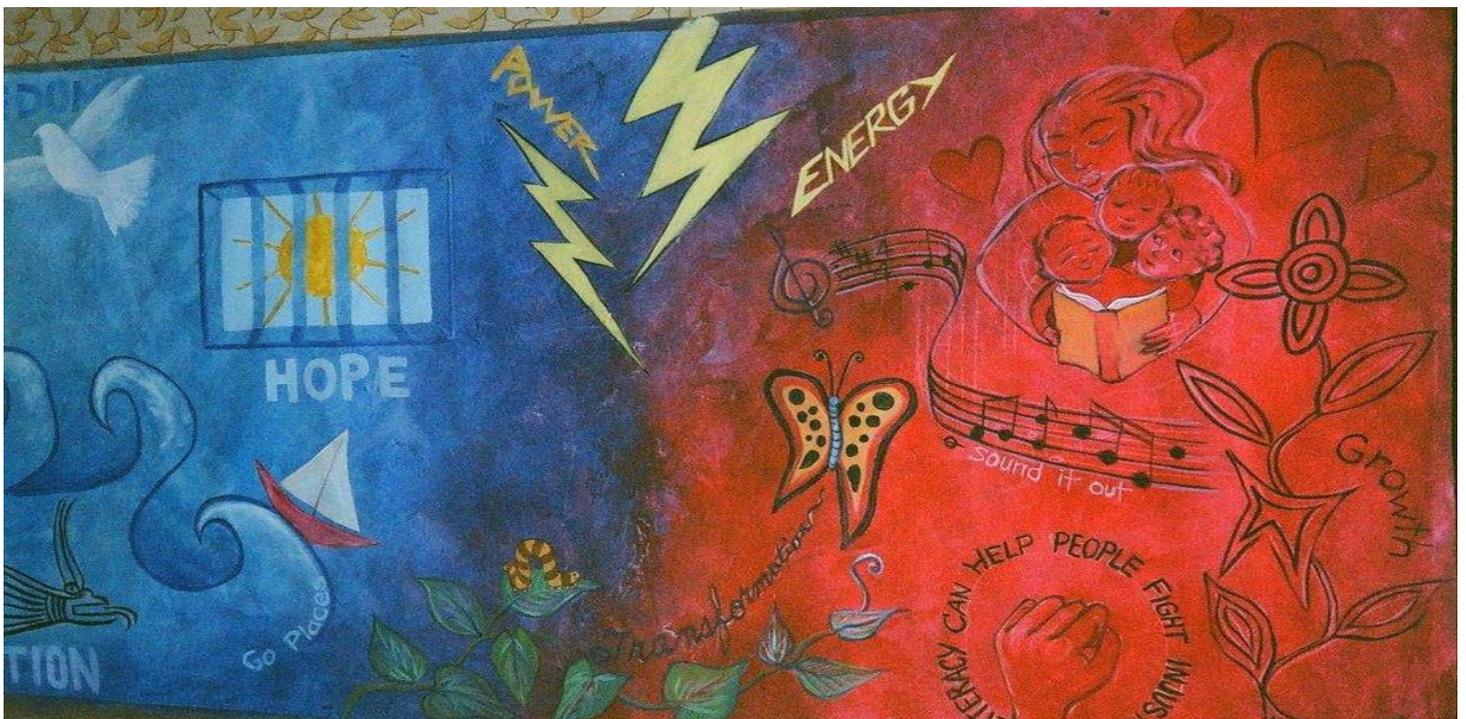




Focus on Learning



This mural was created by Joey Mallet during the Pan-Canadian Interactive Forum, Literacy: More Than Words



English Language Services for Adults Network

Our Mission

ELSA Net empowers its members, throughout the province of British Columbia, to help their clients achieve language and resettlement goals by providing leadership, communication networks, and resources.

Our Vision

*Excellence
in Settlement Language Services.*

Our values reflect our passion for education and support our success.

Excellence
Diversity
Unity
Communication
Accountability
Teamwork
Ethics

ELSA Net STAFF

Executive Director: Cathy Nesmith

Resource Coordinator: Colleen Rogan

Bookkeeper: Marian Ennis

Administrative Assistant: Vania Ganacheva

Contents

- 3** Update from the Ministry
- 5** ELSA Net Update
- 6** New Resources
- 9** From Our Members:
Focus on Literacy
- 11** From Our Members:
Focus on ELSA 4/5
- 17** From Our Community

The ELSA Net Newsletter is available in PDF format on the ELSA Net website:
www.elsanet.org

Contributions to future editions of the ELSA Net Newsletter are welcomed at
esl@elsanet.org

Colleen Rogan,
Editor

Cathy Nesmith,
Copy Editor

James Harder,
Copy Editor

Vania Ganacheva,
Design and Layout

ELSA Net
200-5050 Kingsway,
Burnaby, BC
V5H 4H2
604-639-3230
esl@elsanet.org
www.elsanet.org

Update from the Ministry

From the Settlement and Multiculturalism Division,

Ministry of Attorney General

WelcomeBC.ca

The Multiculturalism and Immigration Branch (MIB) has led the development of a comprehensive and integrated website that provides one-stop information on all aspects of immigration in the province. This new website was launched on April 7, 2008 at www.WelcomeBC.ca.

WelcomeBC.ca targets prospective newcomers and new immigrants to B.C., providing information to help guide every aspect of the immigration journey – from their first decision to select B.C., to all the information required to help newcomers integrate into their new communities. It replaces the old MIB site. Existing information under the “Information for Service Providers” tab on the MIB site has been embedded in the new WelcomeBC site.

Settlement and Multiculturalism Division

The Settlement and Multicultural (SaM) Division continues to move forward implementing the key priorities identified through the various consultation processes. With the additional federal funding, the Ministry of Attorney General is better able to partner with community stakeholders, other Ministries and levels of government to seek opportunities to support immigrant and refugee clients in unique and innovative ways. As we develop and expand the services that support newcomers and communities, under the strategic framework of Welcome BC, we are working towards achieving a welcoming and inclusive province for newcomers.

In addition to the maintenance and enhancements to all the basic BCSAP Streams, we have been working on a number of new and innovative initiatives including:

- Developing projects targeting at-risk families needing specialized settlement support including outreach and systematic follow up;
- Expanding the Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) program to additional School Districts;

- Supporting the development of cross-sector early childhood settlement service models that support high-risk preschool-aged refugee children and their families; and
- Analysing feedback and recommendations from the seniors consultation and moving towards service development aimed at this important group.

New initiatives planned over the next 6 months include:

- Joint training opportunities for Victim Service and Settlement Workers in the area of domestic violence;
- A settlement related early childhood development/early learning forum and consultation;
- A Library/Settlement partnership consultation which will review the Ontario experience and seek a BC model for communities throughout the province;
- A review and updating of the current “Mapping the Field” settlement competency document;
- The long awaited updating of the Newcomers Guide. In addition to English and French, translated versions in 6 other languages will be available near year end;
- Undertaking an advertising campaign to promote ELSA services;
- Supporting Welcome BC through funding opportunities under the Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces initiative; and
- The establishment of a secretariat as recommended in the BCSAP Training Framework.

The expansion of services and workload requires that new positions be established within the Division. All positions will be posted through the provincial government job postings website:

www.postings.gov.bc.ca. The Ministry will provide information on the roles and responsibilities of new Ministry staff as positions are established.

The Ministry will continue to involve ELSA Net in consultations and communicate regularly with service providers during this busy but exciting period of settlement service expansion.



Message from the ELSA Net President



By *Yvonne Chard,*
ELSA Net President

This seems to be conference time. I chose two. A fortnight ago (Australian favorite word) I attended *Literacy more than words* and this week I'm going to the ABEABC conference in Victoria.

The Literacy conference was Pan-Canadian interactive literacy forum (hopefully a forerunner of many more to come). For a beginning 'techie' like me, (and a one time volunteer TV host and camera operator) the process was especially exciting. Nine conferences took place across our country at the same time (more or less). Keynote speakers from various provinces were seen by all of the conference participants in all nine places. What a colossal effort it must have been to organize and orchestrate, and it ran so very smoothly.

The main theme of the conference was the value of literacy, with individual and group stories, and supporting statistics. Community literacy programs were highlighted, and the importance of repeating the stories. For those who would like details on the many activities and speakers, please check the website at www.literacy.cmec.ca.

I have to confess that I didn't hear the word "ELSA" from any of the presentations. It was a conference that energized and stimulated the attendees, and will hopefully lead to renewed energy in dealing with illiteracy.

I am busy helping with plans for the ABEABC conference which is on Teaching-Learning Excellence, with emphasis on learning styles, best practices, and research in practice. One of my favourite parts each year is the Ministry Update - now with

four ministries being represented. Our Government Panel will include members from the Ministries of Education, Advanced Education, and Attorney General plus the Industry Training Authority (Crown Corporation). There is always time to chat informally with those representatives. Many of you know Teresa Saunders, who is now with the Ministry of Education.



Pan-Canadian Interactive Literacy Forum

Her two workshops are of special interest to me. One is The Place and Process of Granting Equivalency Credit in Adult Education Programs, and the other is Adult Foundations Courses: ABE Equivalent?

Each year I attend this conference, and it is always a great opportunity to network with adult educators known from around the province. Their Honours, the Honourable Steven L. Point, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, and Mrs. Gwen Point will open the event. Some of you are probably nearing your year end, while others are gearing up to work through the summer. I hope the next few months go smoothly for everyone, whether at work or on holidays.



*ABEABC Conference,
Victoria*

ELSA Net Update from the Executive Director

By Cathy Nesmith, ELSA Net

It's a moment filled with potential as ELSA classes move into the intermediate realm with the addition of Regular and Labour Market Focus 4/5 classes over the past year. What are the challenges and opportunities that we face trying to meet the needs of these students? As an instructor of an LMF 4 class last year, I was impressed with the breadth of work experience brought into the classroom by these immigrants – a fashion designer, a software engineer, a pastor, a financial advisor, a construction supplies manager, and many others. Their level of English enabled them to share aspects of their jobs, the stresses, the specific demands, the particular satisfactions, in a way that students in lower levels cannot. They reveled in the multicultural classroom, discovering comparisons in expectations and habits amongst themselves, as well as in relation to Canadian norms.

These students are ready to take what your class offers straight out into their active lives. Many of them are already working in their careers, trying to expand a business they've been running in their home countries; or they are keen to get some Canadian training or experience in their field.

Such students are very able to learn from each other, and the detailed knowledge and expertise that they bring helps prepare their classmates to interact in a range of employment situations. At the same time, it's clear that intermediate level students often arrive in class with high expectations – they already know a substantial amount of English and can be quite particular in terms of their current needs. This can be a shock to an instructor used to the uncomplicated appreciation of a class of level 1 students, for example.

We also face the challenges of the current labour market – it is full of opportunities for workers, and students are frequently drawn from the classroom to jobs, affecting attendance and class turn over rates. Although we rejoice when our students can establish themselves as workers in Canada, sometimes the job they get first is not the one that will enrich their lives or utilize their skills. With many highly trained and skilled students in 4/5 classes, getting a job in their professional field is paramount, with an attendant focus on credential recognition, and gaining Canadian work experience.

Intermediate students need us to recognize and support their strengths, appreciate their specific challenges, and build that knowledge into our classroom environments.

ELSA Net Projects

Environmental Conservation Workshops

ELSA Net is implementing a new model of resource provision for ELSA classrooms. Designed to dovetail thematically with the chapter on environmental issues in the newest Newcomer's Guide, ELSA Net is producing three workshops on global warming, energy and water conservation, and garbage and recycling. The workshops target level 4/5, level 3, and level 2 students respectively.

Since April, ELSA providers have been able to book a facilitator to come and present each of these workshops to the appropriate classes. This is providing an opportunity for instructors to bring in an experienced guest speaker, trained in ESL instruction, equipped with materials specifically developed for the topic and class level. The workshops can be incorporated into existing school curriculum under topics such as environment, housing, and current affairs. Ultimately, a resource page will be made available to instructors on our website, with ideas and materials from the workshops to adapt for everyday classroom use.



Environmental workshop

Immigrant and Aboriginal Stories for Childcare

ELSA Net is one of 33 successful applicants (out of 144) to the BC150 MOSAIC Grant fund, "Honouring the Diverse Cultures that Have Shaped This Province". Our project focuses on the creation of regionally specific multicultural resources for childcare workers. We will be choosing two historical events highlighting contributions of an immigrant community and an aboriginal community in BC. Story scripts will be created from these events that are suitable for use in storytelling for children ages 3-5 years. The stories will be presented to childcare professionals in a series of make-and-take workshops in which they discuss the resource and create materials to use with the stories.

We will be developing partnerships with member organizations from our project steering committee, including Westcoast Childcare Resource Centre, the Public Library Services Branch, and Literacy BC. Childcare workers can look for these workshops at the fall ELSA Net Professional Development events.

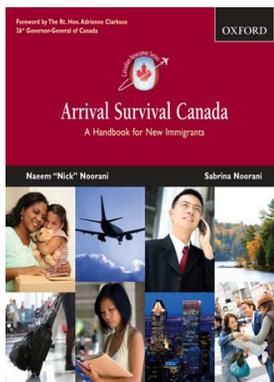
Resources, resources, resources.....

Canadian Newcomer Series - Arrival Survival Guide Book Review

By Colleen Rogan, ELSA Net

Oxford University Press Canada has launched the Canadian Newcomer Series this spring with two books: *Arrival Survival Canada* and *How to Find a Job in Canada*. The series will provide immigrants with the foundation of information needed to help them succeed in Canada at every stage of their new lives.

The Arrival Survival Canada: Handbook for New Immigrants is co-written by Naeem "Nick" Noorani and his wife Sabrina Noorani. Nick is the popular radio talk show host of CBC's "Ask Nick" show and the creator and publisher of Canadian Immigrant Magazine. Perhaps it is their own experiences and interests that make this book stand out as



effectively and succinctly presenting information that is useful for new immigrants to Canada. As I flipped through this book for the first time, I was pleasantly surprised to find reference information that I had long searched for as an ESL instructor. In the chapter on housing, for example, there is the chart that shows pictures and descriptions of different types of housing and spells out the pros and cons of each. There is a map of Canada with average housing

prices for each province. You'll find information on how to make an offer on a property and how to find a realtor as well as how to rent accommodation and how to find subsidized housing. Each chapter is full of detailed information that will address the diverse needs of students in our classrooms. I can see that each chapter has been thoughtfully selected to provide the most pertinent information to newcomers covering topics from multiculturalism to business etiquette. Whether you use it in the classroom or as a resource for your teaching, I'm sure you'll be as thrilled as I was to find what this book has to offer.

Oxford University Press

70 Wynford Drive
Don Mills, Ontario
M3C 1J9
Phone: 416-441-5682
Toll Free: 1-866-229-7025 ext 5682
Fax: 416-441-0345
www.oup.com/ca

Assessments are about to get a lot easier

By Fernando Cartwright

The Canadian Council on Learning is in the final stages of piloting a suite of online tools that will significantly improve the ease of creating and administering tests and other assessments. This suite of tools (Echo Assessments, Echo Online and Echo Calculator) aims to bring the power of the digital age to your keyboard and to your learners.

The Echo Assessments component sits at the core of the system. It provides you with the ability to create and store items for use in your tests and assessments. It also allows you to share, so others can take advantage of items you find particularly useful and accurate in

assessing a learner's performance. And of course, you will have access to items made available by others.



Once you have chosen and ordered the items for your assessment, you can either create a print-ready PDF, or save

it to Microsoft Word if it needs further formatting. You will also have the ability to deliver the assessment online using Echo Online.

Behind all this is a powerful calculation engine that analyzes assessment data. Based on assessment results, items are calibrated so results are comparable between different tests given on the same subject and at the same curricular level.

The Canadian Council on Learning and ELSA are working hard to make Echo available to the network this spring. You will certainly be hearing more about it.

For access to the websites, go to:
www.echo.ccl-cca.ca
www.echoonline.ccl-cca.ca
www.echocalculator.ccl-cca.ca



Cyber Space



By Colleen Rogan

Many of us are becoming increasingly aware (perhaps painfully aware!) that our students come to class with expectations about learning with the aid of a computer. We are moving from teaching “about” computers to teaching language using computers. It can be daunting to teach students who are “computer natives”.

Part of the challenge is simply knowing where to go. And even if you don’t use the computers directly with your students, there are plenty of reference-type resources for your own professional development. For those who are finding it difficult to use computers in the classroom, try out some of these sites for yourself. It might be the first step to integrating computer assisted learning into the classroom. For others who have been onto the idea of computer assisted language learning for longer, please take the hand of someone who is reluctant to grab a mouse! The internet is rich with free resources.

LMF

http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/preventing_discrimination/diversity_diversite/page1-en.asp

- From Canadian Human Rights Commission – how to prevent racism in the workplace
- A good source of reference materials for teachers

<http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/employer.shtml>

- Essential Skills lists (re: literacy and employment).
- This is mostly for employers but gives a good idea of what they are looking for in terms of hiring and retaining employees

Literacy

http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/collections/literacy.html

- Amazingly comprehensive list of ESL literacy resources, materials and research

<http://www.statcan.ca/english/research/89-552-MIE/89-552-MIE2007017.pdf>

- Adult Learning in Canada: A Comparative Perspective Results from

the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey

- Minister of Industry, 2007

<http://www.nald.ca/litweb/province/bc.htm>

- National Adult Literacy Database
- List of literacy organizations in BC

http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/digests/PEYTON.html

- A summary of 5 approaches to teaching ESL Literacy

Parenting skills /childminding

<http://www.ecebc.ca/resources/links.html>

- A few of our members attended an event put on by Literacy BC at the public library. This is what Katie Graham from SUCCESS said about the event and the resources: “LAPS (literacy and Parenting Skills) will come and train facilitators to do sessions on Parenting Skills for Immigrants, but the cool thing from an ELSA standpoint is the materials they have designed for ESL classes www.nald.ca/laps/ (look under ‘Products and Manuals’) and they have CLB linked supplements available - cheap, too!”



Cyber Space

Super fun sites - useful, too!

<http://www.armoredpenguin.com/crossword/>

- This site was a super tip off from “Cyber John” in the Delta School District. Create perfect crosswords puzzles with words from your lessons! It’s easy to use, clear, and, best of all, free! Find links for other puzzle creators and worksheet websites here, too.

<http://www.makebeliefscomix.com>

- Just in case a website to create your own crossword puzzles is not quite cool enough,

here is one to make your own comic strips. Better yet, have your students make them. It’s easy and fun to use.

<http://www.thewclc.ca/edge>

- This is an interactive newsletter written for adult literacy students. Articles are useful and well-written and students can listen as they read. Explore it well before sending your students onto the site.

Writing Software for ELSA 4 and 5

*By Samuel Sheinberg,
NAS Software Inc.*

Business Writing is an excellent general and workplace related writing program. All skills necessary from learning to write a paragraph to creating an impressive resume are included in this program. It is aimed at intermediate to advanced level learners who need to improve their writing skills or are preparing to enter the workforce. Writing friendly and business e-mails, letters, and reports are all part of this practical hands-on program. Activities are organized around authentic texts and the program links to websites, which feature a library of model writing. Extension exercises, podcasts, writing and formatting activities, listening exercises, and activities with acronyms and emoticons are also used to tie the materials more closely to real-world needs.

Each unit finishes with a task related to the learner’s own writing.

Contents include:

- Applying for a job
- Writing a resume
- The writing process
- Successful letters: the basics
- Successful e-mails: the basics
- E-mails and letters: case studies
- Writing clearly and appropriately
- Linking ideas
- Acronyms
- Emoticons and Abbreviations
- Reports: organizing information
- Key sections of a report
- Perfecting your document

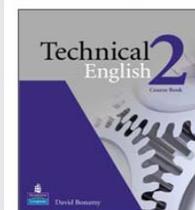
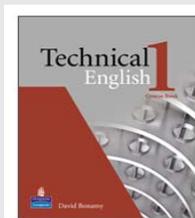
For more information and a demo please visit

<http://www.nas.ca/buswriting.html>

Technical English is a two-level course for students in technical or vocational education, and for company employees in training at work.

It covers the core language and skills that students need to communicate successfully in all technical and industrial specialisations. Components: Course Book, Course Book Audio CD, Workbook with Audio CD, Teacher’s Book with Test Master CD-ROM.

orders@erpi.com
or fax: 1-800-643-4720



From Our Members

Focus on Literacy



An Acrostic Peek into Our Literacy Tool Kit



By Paula Mannington, ELSA Literacy Instructor,
Abbotsford Community Services

Laughter; music; costumes & humour
 Invite volunteers into your classroom
 TPR; mime; magical brain; & movement
 Engage students in concrete, meaningful activities
 Realia; pictures; flashcards; laminated letters & number boards
 Approach new material in a simplified, consistent manner
 Creative repetition: Do the same thing in many different ways
 Yes! The literacy classroom is a challenging, rewarding & great place to be!

These are some of the ideas that surfaced when four literacy level instructors met informally to discuss challenges, share successes, and explore resources, techniques and strategies that work in literacy classrooms. It was a wonderful opportunity to network with other literacy instructors who share common concerns, passion and curiosity for how to best serve adult ESL

literacy learners. We would like to pass along a big

thank you to Colleen Rogan, ELSA Net's Instructional Resource Coordinator, for facilitating our meeting, taking notes while we talked, and supporting our quest for appropriate resources. We believe that collaborative inquiry, sharing best practices, and professional development will benefit not only our learners and ourselves, but also our programs and the communities we serve.

If you are interested in participating in a larger network of support, we'd love to hear from you!

Please contact: Colleen Rogan
resourcecoordinator@elsanet.org



The Challenges and Rewards of Teaching a Literacy Class

By Bobbi Mand, Burnaby English Language Centre
 Teaching literacy has been both rewarding and frustrating. One might wonder how a teacher could feel two extreme emotions at the same time. I have been teaching literacy for 1 ½ years. During this time I have been working with students who are either completely illiterate in their own language or who are illiterate only in English. You might think that the students who are literate in their first language would learn faster. However, I have found this is not always the case. Many factors contribute to the learning curve: age, personal challenges, health. I have also had students who have problems with eyesight and/or hearing, as well as short-term memory loss. So you can imagine the challenges a literacy instructor faces.

Literacy instructors are also faced with challenges within the structure of the program. When students have progressed, there is often nowhere to place them.

They have to continue on in the Literacy class until there is a place for them in the regular ELSA classes. In such cases, I find myself teaching a multi-leveled class with stations where the students are not given full attention because there is not enough of me to go around. Unfortunately, when students do move out of the program they aren't necessarily ready for the regular ELSA program either, because they will always have literacy issues.

As frustrating as this situation is, there are also a lot of rewards. Having a student come into the program not knowing a word of English and not knowing how to read and write, and then being able to answer personal questions after you have taught them for a number of months and being able to read is a reward that I can definitely say I have cherished. I hold onto this feeling every day I teach to remind myself that it is this reward that made me choose to be a teacher in the first place.

From Our Members

Focus on Literacy

New Directions Literacy Class

By Lynda Brown, ELSA Program Instructor, New Directions, Langley, BC

I started teaching literacy to ten Karen refugees from Myanmar (formerly called Burma) in mid-January. Literacy is a new program at our school, and an interesting challenge for any ESL teacher. Some of these challenges include how to build a program to teach English to students who have no knowledge of the Roman alphabet, and who may also not be literate in their own language. Add to this the need to also teach the fundamentals of life in Canada, such as shopping for supplies and dealing with government agencies, and it becomes a “where do I start first” dilemma. If I think developing a program is difficult, I dread to think of what my students must be going through as they work to assimilate and participate in Canadian society. A literacy program needs to consider a balanced, empathetic approach, one that will lay the foundation for future success in a progressive development of English language skills while considerate of the immediate needs of the students. Our program development approach was to identify the key elements for the first semester, which were discussed and agreed upon by the teaching team at our school. The key elements we identified were as follows:



Language/Grammar	Living	Social
The Alphabet	Numbers	Names
Phonics	Colours	Personal hygiene/toiletries
Spelling	Parts of the Body	Songs
Pronunciation	Shopping	Greetings
Dictation	Food	Family and friends
Short vowel words	Money	Manners
Short consonant words	Clothing	Short stories
Prepositions	Fruit and vegetables	Hobbies
Count/Noncount nouns	Kitchen items/utensils	Public holidays

One lesson involved using elements from each category: prepositions (Grammar), fruit and vegetable identification (Living), and songs (Social). I combined the three in the same lesson to keep the students' interest level up and to balance the learning experience.

On this occasion, there were ten students—one from China and nine from Myanmar. I took in some fruit and vegetables and used them for identification and pronunciation. The words were copied onto coloured cards; I used preposition cards to incorporate the words with the realia. I asked them “Wh” questions about the fruit and vegetables, and engaged them in writing, copying, and saying simple complete sentences: e.g. ‘The pear is on the table’. To demonstrate food preparation practices, we washed and cut up the pear and handed it out at break (for some this was their first experience of tasting a pear).

I then played “Love Me Do”, one of the Beatles' songs, and wrote the lyrics on the board. The lyrics to this song are simple and easy to understand. Everyone had a great time singing along. The Chinese student then sang a solo piece from her own country—what a beautiful voice! This motivated the Karen students to respond by singing their national anthem. It was my best literacy class so far.



From Our Members

Focus on ELSA 4/5

Teaching, Testing 1,2,3,4

*By Christina Stechishin
Instructor, ELSA Dept.
Chair VCC Canadian Language
Benchmarks Initiative
Vancouver Community College*

Chris Clark and I were first approached in the fall of 2006 to work on development of new curricula for the upcoming ELSA 4 and 5 classes in BC. Starting in January 2007, we began to gather information.

First we had to establish what CLB levels were involved at each ELSA level. From Wes Schroeder at Western ESL Services in Vancouver, we learned that his assessors place clients into ELSA levels on the assumption that when someone scores at a certain level on a given skill on the Canadian Language Benchmarks Placement Assessment (CLBPT), this suggests that they have demonstrated 70% mastery of the competencies at that level. In their ELSA class, they will consolidate the remaining 30% mastery of competencies at that ELSA entry level, and will spend the remainder of their time working on 70% mastery of CLB competencies at the next level. (see chart on page 12)

We started by compiling and combining the language outcomes from the 2 CLB levels involved at each ELSA level.

After that, we gathered input through members of the ELSA 4 and 5 Project Advisory Committee regarding possible themes and topics on which teachers could build lesson plans at the appropriate levels. After that we started the process of developing lesson ideas around each topic. Finally, after 6 months, the curricula were ready, and we delivered them to the Settlement and Multiculturalism Division for distribution to ELSA providers around the province.

We were later asked to develop new Progress Tests for both ELSA 3 and ELSA 4 to replace the old ELSA 3 Exit Test, as well as a completely new ELSA 5 Exit Test. We analyzed the old ELSA 3 Exit Test to see what we could still use, and applied the same 30%/70% approach to design the tests that we had used to develop the curricula. We then field-tested them on students at VCC and other ELSA providers, such as Immigrant Services Society,

S.U.C.C.E.S.S., the Burnaby English Language Centre, Burnaby School District and the Kamloops Cariboo Regional Immigrant Society. We then made several revisions to the first drafts before sending in our final copies with accompanying materials to the SAM Division.

We are now working on the ELSA 5 Exit Test. This test has higher stakes for students as the results will determine students' placement into advanced levels and higher in other ESL programs. We have finished designing all the tests and began field-testing in April. We hope to finalize the tests near the end of June.

We would like to thank everyone on the Project Advisory Committee, the Project Manager, Dale Hunter, ELSA Department Head at VCC, and the teachers who have participated in the field-testing for their valuable advice, suggestions, comments and support. But most of all, we would like to thank the ELSA students, who have acted as our guinea pigs and who are, after all, the reason why we're all here.

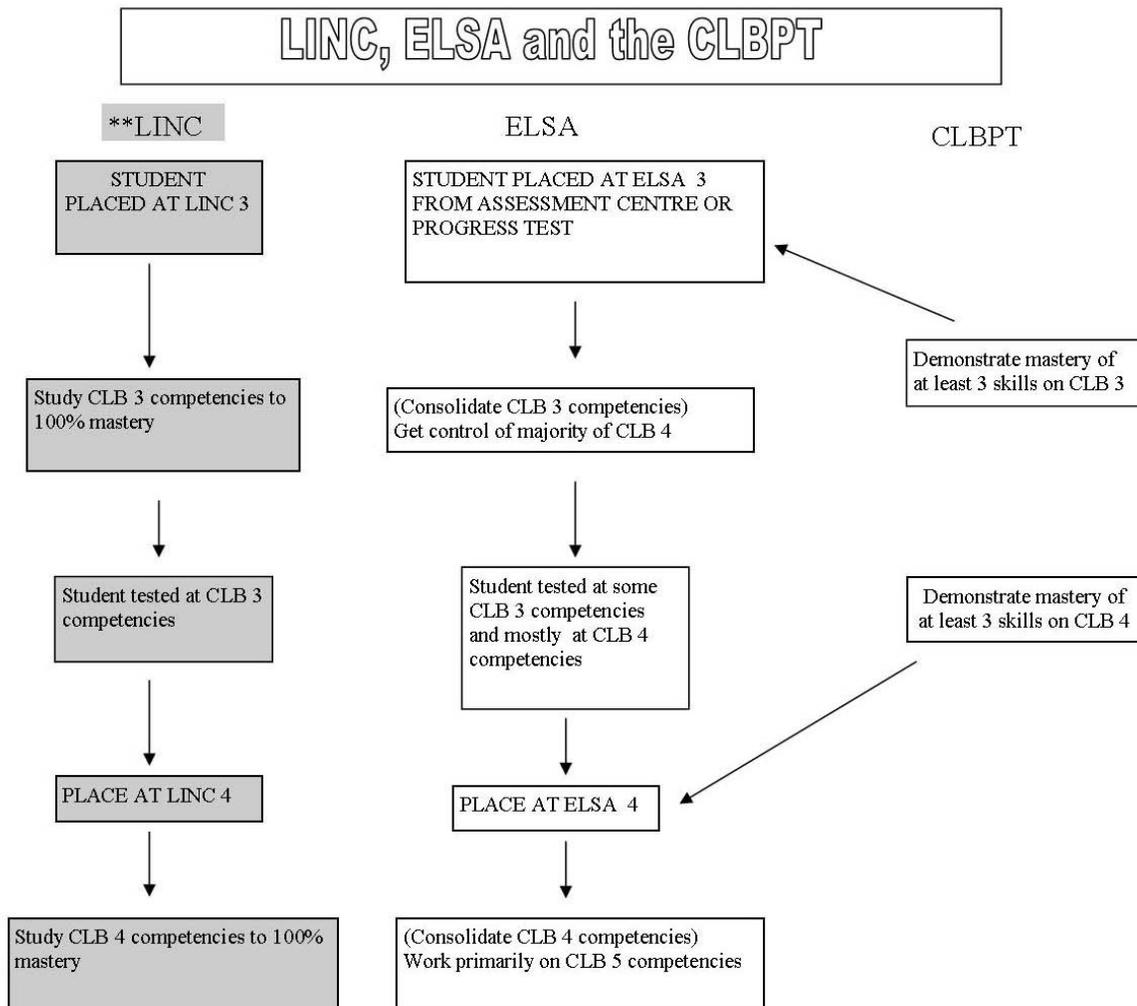
For full version visit <http://www.elsanet.org/news.html>



From Our Members

Focus on ELSA 4/5

Many teachers have been debating about the alignment of Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) competencies and ELSA levels for some time now. It's an interesting debate that begins its history with our ELSA program predecessor, LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) which is the program our cohorts to the east are still working within. Previously, the curricula and tests developed by Vancouver Community College (VCC) worked on the assumption that the placement tests and the CLB levels coincided - as they do in the LINC program. However, with the introduction of the ELSA 4 and 5 classes and the creation of new curricula and testing materials, it became apparent to the curricula and test developers at VCC that there was a "gap" between the students coming up through the system and students who came to classes directly from the assessment centres using the Canadian Language Benchmark Placement Tool (CLBPT). It turned out that the previous progress and exit tests were pitched at inappropriately low levels and were placing students in classes that were too high. The new level 3 and 4 progress tests and the subsequent level 5 exit test, are based on different assumptions about the correlation between ELSA levels and the CLB competencies. The following chart compares LINC and ELSA class levels with the CLB Competencies.



By Dale Hunter and Colleen Rogan

From Our Members

Focus on ELSA 4/5

LMF 4/5 Student Profile: Q & A with Karen Lai

By Shirene Salamation, ISS

Karen Lai came from Tian Jin, China one year ago with her husband and daughter. Karen had an 18-year career importing/exporting textiles before coming to



Canada. Karen chose the LMF 5 class because she wanted to learn about Canadian workplaces and culture and finding employment in Canada. Karen now works as a full-time ELSA Program Assistant with the Immigrant Services Society of BC.

What are the most valuable things you've learned?

I learned many office skills in English, such as MS Office, leaving messages for my co-workers, or asking something of my supervisor.

Which activities impressed you most?

Through the River Rock Casino field trip, I learned about work opportunities around us and the need for a positive attitude at work. At 1-800-Got-Junk? I saw how a firm grew from being a small Canadian company to an international franchise; I was impressed by their passion.

What was it like studying as an adult?

It gave me energy and confidence in starting my career in Canada.

What are your likes/dislikes about LMF ELSA?

I got to know classmates in the program who have similar and different backgrounds, and we could exchange many life experiences besides English study. The course was a little short. If we had more time, we could have participated in more activities related to workplace skills.

What should teachers know about students?

Teachers should have some knowledge of the cultures in the class, about their values and ideas.





From Our Members

Focus on ELSA 4/5

Healthcare Lesson Plan

By Susanna Fawkes,
Kamloops Immigrant Services

This ELSA 4/5 combined class is comprised of a diverse group of 15 students from various countries. The group has a wide range of education and professional backgrounds. The lesson is divided into three parts: 1) Computer lab: 90 minutes, 2) Conversation Skills: 60 minutes 3) Grammar and Composition: 60 minutes.

Learning and Achievement Objectives:

- Listening and understanding natural, authentic native speech in the healthcare context
- Paraphrasing, retelling stories listened to on the Internet
- Discussing different healthcare issues and cases
- Writing about healthcare stories, using the new vocabulary, paying attention to the correct use of verb tenses.

Rationale:

- Students are often familiar with common medical terms, and the names of body parts; however, they

often do not know how to pronounce or spell them.

- This lesson is typical of my overall approach, based on teaching integrated skills. I always have students listen to/watch or read material; then they do the discussion followed by vocabulary work. At the end, they focus on grammar and writing.

Materials:

- Computers, online *True Life Stories*, *HealthiNation* (http://www.healthination.com/true_life_stories.php), black-board.

Plans for Assessments:

- **INFORMAL. Diagnostic:** Use discussion time for grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation assessment. **Formative:** Use vocabulary work for assessment of students' knowledge of healthcare vocabulary and pronunciation. **Summative:** Use the final writing pieces to assess grammar problems, vocabulary use, and overall understanding.
- Take notes during the students' discussion to

learn which vocabulary to work on later.

- Assess each student's writing individually and explain any grammar problems and vocabulary use. Students then correct their writing at home. The teacher goes through the edited piece again during the next session.
- I assess myself according to students' involvement in discussion and the quality of their writing entries. If they are active during the discussion, and if their writing shows comprehension of the material, I consider the lesson to have been successful.

Methods, techniques, and strategies:

I use individual and group or pair work, depending on the number of students. Students practice both oral and written language. Students have to comprehend the input and, try to paraphrase the stories. During the writing class, students do peer editing. The lessons are student-focused. The teacher's role is to monitor, guide, explain, and informally assess students.

For full version visit <http://www.elsanet.org/news.html>



From Our Members

Focus on ELSA 4/5

The Integrated Skills Approach

By *Sandra Ingrid Schecker,*

ELSA Instructor, PICS, Surrey

As an ELSA instructor, I strive to educate myself and come up with engaging ways for my students to learn. Through much discussion and research, I have chosen to use the 'Integrated Skills Approach' in my classroom. I have had great success with it. To put this approach in simple terms, you can imagine it as a large pot of vegetable soup. This soup consists of many different vegetables: carrots, peas, etc. The vegetables metaphorically stand for different aspects of language learning: reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar and vocabulary. We organize our lessons according to a plan. And just as we must knowingly combine a vast array of vegetables in our vegetable soup to provide the greatest amount of nutrients, the same holds for our lessons. As teachers, we must be aware of the individual needs and interests of our students, and we must also plan to combine the language aspects in such a way that our students will reap the most benefits.

To extend our metaphor of the pot of soup, if we combine only peas and water we will gain fewer nutrients than if we add a wide variety of fresh vegetables. Language learning acts in a similar fashion: the more aspects of language learning that you throw into your lesson, the more successful your lesson will be. This cooking lesson serves as an analogy for the widely used 'Segregated Skills Approach,' which teaches the aspects of language on a segregated level. For many of us, we see the struggles that our students go through learning a new language and striving to adapt to Canadian culture.

A 2001 article from the Center for Applied Linguistics makes some suggestions to help with this. "Integrated Skills in the ESL/EFL Classroom," Oxford (2001), posits that teachers should consider the following steps: get to know your students and their individual strengths and needs; promote

language learning strategies; choose textbooks and materials that promote the integration of all skills of the English language; learn more about different language learning approaches; and reflect upon the approaches that you are currently using—and don't be afraid to try something new in your classroom. By integrating all of these aspects and focusing on the students' needs, teachers can prepare that vegetable soup with all the essential vitamins and minerals

intact. Once this has been achieved, students will be able to build a solid foundation for effective communication.

References

Oxford, R. (2001) *Integrated Skills in the ESL/EFL Classroom*. Center for Applied Linguistics.



From Our Members

Member Profile

Eva Touzard: Making ELSA More Meaningful to Her Students

By Shruti Prakash Joshi, PICS

Eva Touzard is a name to reckon with at the PICS ELSA program. Eva goes that extra mile in making ELSA meaningful for all of her students. PICS employees are familiar with Eva's smiling face and ever helpful nature. Whether it is Employment programs, the Settlement programs or her own ELSA program, Eva is always ready to lend a helping hand.

"Working in the ELSA program is not only about teaching students English. It goes way beyond that. Interacting with them, counseling them on certain matters, and helping them find a foothold in a new country makes the job challenging and satisfying at the same time," she said.

Born in Germany, Eva moved to Canada when she was only 22 years old. Eva discovered her love of teaching when she was asked to be a German instructor at a spiritual school in the Himalayas in India. "I knew then that I would always be a teacher," she remarked.

After getting her TEAL certification, she started volunteering in the PICS ELSA Program. And when an opportunity to teach



at PICS presented itself, she immediately took it up. "Teaching in the ELSA Program, especially here at PICS, taught me how wonderful it is to live in a multicultural environment," she said. She teaches Level 3 in the mornings and evenings at the Surrey Sikh temple location. "I love my job, I love my students, and I guess I will continue to do so forever," she says with a smile.

Eva is influenced by Sahaja Yoga. She also practices meditation. The peace and spiritual understanding she gains from these practices are extremely helpful to her in her classes as well. "I come across many students facing a

number of issues and in the process the teacher naturally takes on the role of a counselor," explains Eva. Although careful not to become enmeshed in her students' issues, she offers help outside of the classroom wherever it is needed. "I try to give them

solutions and refer to whatever kind of services that they may need."

A married mother of two, she firmly believes that to excel in one's vocation, especially teaching, one must first go through a process of self realization. Great thoughts Eva, we love having you here!



From Our Community

Inspiration and Sharing in Victoria

By Noreen Cross, TEAL Sessions Chair

The TEAL Sessions Conference was held in Victoria for the first time on February 16, 2008 with 52 attendees from Vancouver Island, Vancouver, Prince George, and the Okanagan Valley. It was great to see such positive energy radiating from the presenters and participants. Cathy Ebert did an amazing job at finding the diverse, interesting, and inspiring workshops offered. These included *Vocabulary Building: Beyond Lists* by Jennifer Walsh Marr; *Storytelling* by Mary Mahoney; *Promoting Project Work in ESL-Finding a Path* by Cristina Petersen; *Intercultural Language Teaching* by Cathy Ebert; *Using Blogs in the Second Language Classroom* by Kathleen Bortolin; *Participatory Novels* by Laura Nimmon; and *It's Getting Hot in Here: Warming Things Up* by Cristina Peralejo and Noreen Cross. I would like to give a big thanks to the presenters for taking the time to create and share these useful workshops. The staff at Global Village, Victoria were gracious hosts and helped make this TEAL Sessions run smoothly. They also very generously sponsored the breaks with

delicious food, coffee and tea. Kudos to Paula Jamieson, Nancy Ami and Scott Wilson. The TEAL Sessions is generally a quick day conference where teachers can come and attend practical workshops with ideas they can immediately use in their classrooms. The evaluation surveys indicated that many teachers who attended this event in Victoria really value these hands-on, practical workshops. There was some great feedback on what kinds of workshops people would like to see at future TEAL sessions. Here are some of the topics mentioned: *using technology in the classroom and hands-on tech "stuff", pronunciation ideas, vocabulary building and recycling, creative error correction techniques, drama activities, using visuals in the classroom, problems in teaching night classes, reading lessons, and using music in the class.* If you or anyone you know has expertise or interest in these areas, and would like to present at the next TEAL Sessions, please contact admin@bctéal.org. We want to keep sharing the inspiration!



Using Songs in the ESL/EFL Class

By Noreen Cross, TEAL Sessions Chair

Music can bring a whole new dimension to class. Songs provide language input, which is an essential element in language acquisition (Krashen, 1982). Songs also reflect culture, which plays a significant role in language learning. They usually contain themes surrounding a topic or issues that provide contexts for learning vocabulary. Songs have been known to be a negative source of content for learning grammar; however, if well chosen, songs can be a valuable source of grammar reinforcement. Listening skills can also be enhanced through songs as they provide students with practice in listening to varying forms of intonation, and rhythm, which is very important in language acquisition. Songs naturally extend speaking into a new context through the sung word. (Murphey, 1992).

Even though musical tastes can be quite varied in a class, I find that if you identify the purpose behind using the song, the students will look beyond the style of the music. Whether it be learning contrastive adjectives, practicing second conditionals, talking about the various themes or practicing sentence stress, students naturally get into the song through the language point.

I have used several songs that have worked well in class. Some of these include "Hand in My Pocket" by Alanis Morissette, "If I had a Million Dollars" by The Barenaked Ladies, "100 Years" by Five for Fighting, and "Tom's Diner" by Suzanne Vega.

Songs can be a useful and very enjoyable tool in teaching English, but they aren't for every class. Choosing songs that are comprehensible with fairly straightforward themes is better than choosing obscure and complex songs. Of course, much also depends on the level of your students. You are not always trying to find the meaning of the song, but it is good for the students to have some sense of the song to make it more meaningful. Another way to extend the use of songs in class is to talk a bit about the background of the musical artist(s) behind the song. It can take the students to another level of culture and English outside of the class. There are so many ideas for using music in class, and a book I highly recommend is Tim Murphey's, *Music and Song*.

References:

- Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition in the Classroom*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
 Murphey, T. (1992). *Music and song*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

For full version visit <http://www.elsanet.org/news.html>

From Our Community



Promoting and supporting literacy and learning since 1990

Literacy BC Forum

By *Katie Graham*,
ELSA Program Coordinator, SUCCESS

On March 6th LiteracyBC www.literacy.bc.ca sponsored a forum on “English Literacy for New Canadians: The Intergenerational Challenge” at the Vancouver Public Library. The event focused on a family literacy approach to the challenges of language acquisition and parenting support within recent immigrant families.

HELP (Human Early Learning Partnership) www.earlylearning.ubc.ca, who since 2000 have collected province-wide information on Kindergarten children’s readiness to learn at school in partnership with the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development, presented their latest research and analysis. They use EDI (Early Development Instrument) a Kindergarten teacher administered survey that assesses children’s developmental status in five developmental domains: physical health and well being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, and communication and general knowledge. They are looking at neighbourhoods rather than individuals, and some preliminary generalizations suggest possible correlations between both first language and cultural groups

and communication and knowledge skills scores. In the future they will be looking at factors such as socioeconomic status and family size.

Julia Dodge, the Regional Literacy Coordinator for the Fraser Valley, described the success of their ‘holistic family-focused’ approach to literacy, a model many in the room felt would work well in their own communities, though concerns were raised over funding and jurisdictional issues.

A representative from LAPS (Literacy and Parenting Skills) www.nald.ca/laps created by the Further Education Society from Alberta presented on their train the trainer and other programs used throughout Canada. They are open to establishing new contacts. Of special interest to ELSA providers are their reasonably priced manuals. These include an ESL oriented version with available Supplementary Materials for Canadian Language Benchmarks 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8.

The day was a great chance to network with settlement organizations, libraries, school districts and government representatives. However, of the about 70 people in the room only 2 were from ELSA, so Colleen and Literacy BC will be working to see that we all have a seat at the table at events like this in the future.

From Our Community



The Province of British Columbia as well as the mayors of both Vancouver and Richmond declared April 20th – 27th ESL week in BC! BC TEAL organized community activities in honour of ESL Week, including a writing contest for both teachers and students. This was perfect timing to celebrate BC TEAL's 40th anniversary conference! This year's theme was "Honouring the Past; Embracing the Future", and was held on April 25th – 26th at Kwantlen University College, Richmond campus. There were several main events, including plenary keynote speakers Dr. Diane Larsen-Freeman and Dr. Nina Spada. The conference hosted a panel discussion on Challenges to ESL Professionalism in the 21st Century, which was open to the public. There were also a variety of workshops, plenary speakers, and employment fairs for professional development. A Champagne Toast Celebration on the evening of Friday April 25th kicked off the celebration of BC TEAL bringing teachers, students and the community together for 40 years.

For more information about BC TEAL, find BC TEAL online at www.bctéal.org.

Conference on Second Language Communication Skills for Immigrant Workers

By Colleen Rogan, ELSA Net

On March 6th and 7th, Citizenship and Immigration Canada sponsored a Conference in Mississauga, Ontario. The Conference hosted delegates from across the country including policy makers, ESL researchers, and representatives from language training organizations.

Lionel Laroche was the keynote speaker who set the tone for the Conference. Lionel outlined the challenges of understanding social structures in the context of intercultural communication. His presentation clearly explained the key factors contributing to feelings of disillusionment and frustration for skilled immigrants. He pointed

out that a particular source of frustration for new immigrants is the lack of "soft skills". These are the culturally specific communication skills that go beyond semantics and encompass the appropriate use of language. This element of communication is often very challenging to understand for new immigrants even though they may have high technical skills. He made recommendations for specialized language training programs that address specific needs of learners with ample opportunities for students to use language in "real" environments.

Presenters during the first day of the Conference focussed on academic research related to TESL. Academics spoke on

topics of pragmatics, pronunciation and motivation. The second day of the Conference was devoted to panel discussions highlighting three panels expressing their points of view on Settlement Language Training. Panels included one with employers, one with service providers and one focussing on host receptivity in the workplace. Each panel outlined their programs, successes and challenges and, most importantly, their eagerness to employ and train new immigrants.

Ultimately, this was a high quality Conference that offered much insight into language training programs. It was the perfect opportunity to network and learn about the ideas, challenges and practices of programs in other parts of Canada.

ELSA Net

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.

Strategic goals

- o Maintain a peer network among organizations delivering ELSA programs to support excellence in program delivery.
- o Be a proactive information and communication channel between Government and ELSA member organizations.
- o Collaborate with organizations with mutual concerns for developing and delivering resources and services for immigrants, refugees, and newcomers.
- o Promote and support ongoing professional development.

ELSA Net contact information:

Cathy Nesmith
executivedirector@elsanet.org

Colleen Rogan
resourcecoordinator@elsanet.org

Vania Ganacheva
admin@elsanet.org



English Language Services for Adults Network

#200 - 5050 Kingsway
Burnaby, British Columbia, V5H 4H2

Phone: 604-639-3230
Fax: 604-639-8116
esl@elsanet.org
www.elsanet.org