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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 elsanet@telus.net

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PIRS ELSA 1-2 Children's Program

By Pat Steiner, PIRS

Margaret Leung came to Canada from Hong Kong in 1988 and has been working with the children of parents in the ELSA (LINC) program for the last twelve years. She's taught a lot of children in those years and seen quite a few changes. Margaret's first job back in 1993 was with Richmond Multicultural Concerns Society, where she was part of a team that cared for children whose parents were in classes.

During her years in Richmond, Margaret enrolled in a Family Day Care Program and went on to graduate from Vancouver Community College with a Certificate in Early Childhood Education in 2000. Margaret worked in Richmond until 2004, when RMCS lost their ELSA contract. Margaret joined Pacific Immigrant Resources Society (PIRS) the following September and has been working in the ELSA program at the Mt. Pleasant location.

When asked about the joys of teaching children, Margaret's face beams with a quick smile. "I love the children," she says. "I like to help them when they are new to here. I feel sorry when they are crying, new to the country, the place, separated from their

parents. Being with children is easy. They feel you love them and later they are happy, and playing with others and it makes you happy." Margaret enjoys that the program is multicultural and feels she has benefited from meeting families from a variety of cultures.

"The challenges come," says Margaret, "at the beginning when the children first arrive and are settling in." Having only one staff is tough and Margaret relies on the help of caring volunteers to help moms and children adjust. Margaret is resourceful and enjoys bringing extra materials to enhance the program. She



PIRS Childcare Worker Margaret Leung

really wants everyone to know that the Children's Program is about teaching children through play.

Currently, Margaret's program is full. She has six children ranging in age from two to four

years and there is one child on the waitlist. The program started in September, and the children (and their moms!) have adjusted quickly to having someone other than a family member care for them. The room is full of the buzz of children learning and having fun. Parents often thank Margaret as they leave for the day. "Parents really appreciate the Children's program. They like that it's free and they love how we work with their children."



Update from the Ministry

Update from the Settlement and Multiculturalism (SaM) Division

By Vicky Chiu, Interim Manager Stakeholder Relations, Settlement and Multiculturalism Division

ELSA Levels 4/5

- The provincial government recently approved \$5 million in funding over three years for intermediate language training with a labour market focus. This funding will begin to address a gap in the current ELSA model, and support the economic performance of recent immigrants to BC as well.
- A Draft RFP was posted on BC Bid for two weeks in September.
- Amendments were made and the Final RFP was posted on October 12 and will close on November 9.
- Service Delivery is expected to begin in January 2007.

Alternative Service Delivery (English Language Training)

- The Ministry has extended the pilots in the four original sites (Salmon Arm, Revelstoke, Smithers, and Terrace), for an additional year (April 2006 - March 2007).
- The Ministry has expanded the pilot, starting in September, to four more sites (Quesnel, Port Alberni, Squamish and Fort St John).
- The Alternative ESL service has replaced the ELSA program in Quesnel and Port Alberni.
- Capilano College is implementing the alternative services in Squamish. Fort St John Literacy Society has been contracted to start service delivery in Fort St. John.
- The Division is developing a threshold model to provide a framework for determining where there is emerging demand for alternate service delivery and where there is sufficient demand for regular ELSA classes. This model will be provided to ELSA Net for feedback in the near future.

On-Site Monitoring

The Division is implementing on-site-monitoring for all BCSAP contracts, using the model piloted with about twenty contracts in the spring. A letter on the subject was sent out to all BCSAP contractors from Jim Cowan and Rob Boldt on October 6th. The Service Agreement Officers have begun setting up appointment times with their contractors for the site monitoring. The monitoring activities are expected to span several months. The monitoring is part of our overall accountability framework, but it is also expected that this will enhance com-

munications and provide agencies with an opportunity to give both formal and informal feedback to the Division about how things are going in the field.

BCSAP Training Plan

- The SaM Division has decided to use a phased approach to develop a training strategy to guide BCSAP training initiatives.
- The Division has contracted Collin Mercer to develop a Training Framework by mid-November. The work in this phase will analyse different training models including competency based models. It will recommend an approach to support the needs of BCSAP workers in all Streams, clarify roles and responsibilities, identify cost considerations and determine how training can develop and support a professional workforce.
- Collin has already started gathering information from BC and other provinces and will approach a number of BCSAP providers for input. He will bring information to a provincial Training Committee for discussion.
- AMSSA and ELSA Net have identified representatives for the Committee. The Ministry representative on this committee is Norah Boltin.

2007 Settlement Conference

- The SAM Division will organize a 2007 provincial immigrant settlement conference, in collaboration with AMSSA and ELSA Net, to provide networking, training and planning opportunities to front-line and managerial staff involved in the delivery of BCSAP services.
- AMSSA and ELSA Net have identified representatives for a Conference Committee. Vicki Chiu, on behalf of Alison Dudley, will be convening a committee meeting to discuss an appropriate scope, agenda, time, and location for this conference.
- In the meantime, the Division is developing a few budgeting options for consideration.

Newcomer's Guide

- An RFP is now posted on BC Bid for the development of the 2007 Newcomer's Guide. Closing date is November 14, 2006.
- The plan is to have the 2007 Guide available in English (a Plain Language version and an ESL version). It will also be available in French, Chinese, Punjabi, Korean, Farsi, Vietnamese, Arabic, Russian, and Spanish. The Guide is expected to be completed in May/June 2007.





ELSA Net Update from Coordinator

By Brenda Lohrenz, ELSA Net

As we come closer to the finish of the year (can you believe we're already at late November?) ELSA Net has a lot of accomplishments to list for a busy 2006. First, a sincere thanks to all the hours of committee work done by our members—we would not have come so far were it not for your input and dedication. Our projects of the past year have included the following:

- * An on-line updateable 'Directory of ESL Courses & Employment Programs for Immigrants in British Columbia' (<http://elsanet.org/esldirectory/>)
- * Our newly revamped www.elsanet.org
- * The much anticipated and functional guide to our student tracking and recording system: *STaRS Handbook & STaRS Handbook for Assessors*
- * A Classroom Resources Project that saw dollars put towards resources for ELSA such as computer programs and a reissue of the LINC video resource package
- * Extensive feedback and recommendations for the ELSA Operational Policy Manual, much of which was incorporated by the Ministry
- * A new in-house ELSA Net Policy and Procedures Manual, and a financial engagement review of our books
- * Two issues of our informative newsletter (spring and this fall issue)
- * And of course our fall professional development series of events—culminating in the Lower Mainland event in Burnaby on November 20

Thank you again to all who have made contributions to accomplishing the impressive list above. We are now looking to the up and coming, and hope to get you as excited and interested in some new initiatives:

ActNow

The Premier launched ActNow BC in

March 2005 with the goal of making British Columbia the healthiest jurisdiction ever to host the Olympic and Paralympic games. Through financial support, ELSA Net and AMSSA, along with the Ministry of Attorney General Multiculturalism and Immigration Branch, have been approved to take part in a project to further the ActNow objectives in our immigrant communities. The project is just getting underway, with plans to produce a curriculum and toolkit of resources. Contact Brenda at elsanet@telus.net if you are interested in participating on the advisory committee for this project. (Instructors are invited to get involved!)

Stakeholder Linkages Committee

ELSA Net is planning to undertake a project to ascertain appropriate external stakeholder communication linkages, and opportunities for external partnerships. Do you have ideas on who we should be linking with to better support your ELSA program and clients? Let us know by being on our advisory committee. Contact Erika at elsanet2@telus.net

Outreach to Frontline

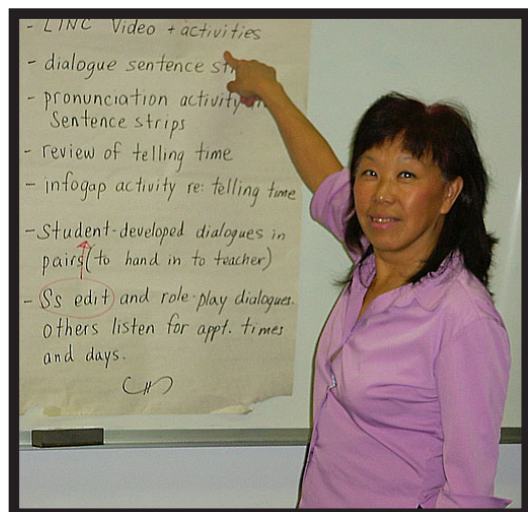
ELSA Net is also wondering how we can better support frontline staff including support staff, instructors, childcare workers and assessors in our sector. We hope to join with AMSSA to come up with some ideas on pulling all our BC-SAP (BC Settlement and Adaptation Program) Streams together. See Erika's article on p. 10 for more information to get involved!

What's New?

Certainly the Lower Mainland/Fraser Valley Labour Market Focus ELSA 4/5 RFP has had people talking. We

hope to keep everyone updated on the outcomes of that process. Unfortunately due to former RFPs, we have lost some excellent organizations and good people from our sectoral team. We now hope the direction we are heading in 2007 is focused instead on team *building!* We will continue to work towards ensuring that long term initiatives through the Ministry include labour market focussed programming in the regional areas (Island, North and Interior) as well, instead of limiting them to this small stretch of land on the south coast.

Finally last, but certainly not least, we will be bidding farewell to Ming Berka our President as she moves towards her retirement in 2007. From all indications in speaking to Ming, this doesn't mean a wave and a good-bye—this champion of the sector has so many volunteer projects in the making, my head is spinning! I'm certain she will top off all her activities with some excellent adventures as she heads out to travel the world with her nomadic husband. Have fun Ming—and thanks for all the good times. Your passion and commitment will be missed!





Community Perspective

Giving Back to the Community

By Asli Kucukbumin, Teaching Assistant in the ELSA Program at Abbotsford Community Services

As ELSA staff, we want to contribute to our clients' settlement. We take pride as they integrate into the community. The ELSA program in Mission is especially proud of two clients and the roles they have come to play in society.

I interviewed Kiok (Hanna) Kim and Jong Jae (James) Choi, who emigrated to BC from Korea in 2001. Immediately, after their settlement in Mission, Hanna and James noticed the need to help homeless people within their community. They decided to host two homeless people at their home in Mission—Hanna and James offered them a place to sleep and three meals a day. However, the guests' substance abuse problems led to theft and security concerns, which did not allow the couple to

continue hosting more guests. Still wanting to make a positive change in their community, Hanna and James decided to approach the issue from a different angle and started serving weekly lunches to homeless people from their house.

The number of recipients increased dramatically over the years and this led them to move the venue to a nearby church and to recruit volunteers to assist them in preparing and serving food. Currently, Hanna and James have five volunteers who come every Tuesday morning to help them prepare lunch. At Christmas,

over two-hundred people benefit from this mini-food bank, so Hanna, James and the volunteers need to prepare a lot of food.

The couple believes this is just a small contribution and that more needs to be done. Hanna suggests, "If we all do our share in the community, we will have less hunger and less crime." When I asked them about their future

plans, they answered firmly that they would keep serving the hungry in their community as long as their health allows them to.

During the interview, we also talked about ELSA and its role in their lives in Canada. They explained to me that when they first arrived in Canada, they could not communicate with either the homeless or the church members. Hanna said, "ELSA classes helped us to help others. Jackie (Jackie Clancy is the instructor in the multi-level ELSA class in Mission) knows how to keep

her students motivated and entertained." Overall, they both agreed that their teacher does an amazing job at keeping the attention and enthusiasm of students who attend the evening classes after a full day of work.

I left the interview with very positive feelings because Hanna and James not only represent compassion but they also remind me that no matter where I am from, the Fraser Valley is my community—a caring, vibrant community, thanks to the efforts of people like Hanna and James.



Hanna and James in their garden



From Our Community of Service Providers

ELSA Health Education Project

By Greg Hislop, MDCM, Cancer Control Research, BC Cancer Agency

In the Spring 2006 newsletter, we provided information about a health education ELSA project that the BC Cancer Agency and its partner, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center (Seattle), are conducting on cancer prevention. Findings from six focus groups of ESL teachers and six focus groups of ESL students were used to develop two different cancer prevention ELSA level 3 lessons. All the teachers and students who participated in these focus groups were from the Lower Mainland.

The health education ELSA project now provides guest speakers for ELSA level three classes in the Greater Vancouver area. Students participating in this project attend one of the two cancer prevention classes, complete a short baseline questionnaire before the lesson begins, and then do a follow-up interview about six months after the class. All students who participate are paid honoraria as tokens of appreciation for their time. Participating ELSA organizations are also

compensated by the project on a per-class basis.

S.U.C.C.E.S.S. and Richmond Continuing Education sit on the Advisory Committee for this project. These ELSA providers, along with Immigrant Services Society, are currently collaborating with the BC Cancer Agency to provide cancer prevention lessons. Ten of these health education classes have already been completed and student response has been positive (over 90% of eligible students have agreed to participate).

The project currently focuses on Cantonese, Korean, and Mandarin speaking students who attend ELSA level three classes at S.U.C.C.E.S.S., Richmond Continuing Education, or Immigrant Services Society. However, there are plans to extend the project to other linguistic groups, as well as other organizations that provide ELSA 3 classes in early 2007.

If you have questions about this project, or if your organization is interested in participating, please contact Wendy Lam (604.675.8067) at the BC Cancer Agency.

2007 Multicultural Health Fair

Mark your calendars for Canada's largest Multicultural Health Fair! On Saturday, March 3, 2007, the third AMSSA multicultural health fair will be held at the Croatian Cultural Centre in Van-

couver from 11 am to 5 pm. This facility is located at 3250 Commercial Drive, a few blocks from the Broadway Skytrain Station.

Filled with fun and educational activities, the Health Fair is a free event that invites visitors of various cultural backgrounds to discover the secret to get fit, stay healthy, and be safe. This one-stop shop for health information and preventative health issues answers questions about healthy foods and connects the multicul-



tural community to BC's health resources. Interactive health services will also be available on-site in languages of new Canadians—Chinese, Farsi, French, Korean, Punjabi, Spanish and Vietnamese.

AMSSA will have a table at the Fall 2006 ELSA Net Conference, "Literacy: The Tool for Empowerment" on November 20th. Be sure to visit us for information on activity sheets and lesson plan ideas for student participation at the Multicultural Health Fair, as well as great volunteer opportunities.

For information and updates on the health fair, go to www.amssa.org/healthfair2007.



From Our Community of Service Providers

Creating a Bully-Free Environment

By Lori de Wet, ICA Victoria

The childcare providers from ICA in Victoria and the Nanaimo Multicultural Society gathered together with facilitator Sarah Chapman-Chen for a very informative workshop called "Creating a Bully-Free Environment."

We were given a hand-out where rules were presented in a very clear and concise manner. I know it will hang in a visible spot at our centre and become an integral part of our program.

It was interesting to learn about the Safe Spaces Rule which goes like this:

- My body is safe ~ This means that no one hits me, kicks me, pushes me or hurts me.
- My feelings are safe ~ This means that no one hurts my feelings by saying mean things or by calling me names or by laughing at me.
- My work is safe ~ This means that no one damages what I am working with.

An important part of teaching these guidelines to children is to use sign language along with saying the words. To sign "Not Safe" use your right hand

thumb with the nail facing down and slide it forward quickly a few times under your chin. That is "Not". To sign "Safe" use both hands with your palms facing down at mid-torso swishing side to side with one hand going over top

A person is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more persons. (Olweus, 1991)

of the other. As you say the words, do the sign language for the child. It will take time but eventually each child will come to understand.

A child isn't considered a bully until the age of eight. Before eight he or she

is considered a child who exhibits "red flag" behaviour. As Early Childhood Educators we have the ability to guide the children in our care towards a healthy future. We need to educate ourselves in order to educate the children. For more information please go to www.wstcoast.org.



My time in ELSA

By Myoung Sook (Suah) Song, Former New Directions-Langley student

The first day in ELSA I was really nervous because I couldn't understand anything. In Korea, I'd always felt learning English was important, but because I was always busy with my own business, I came to Canada without having studied very much. My husband emphasized the importance of studying English, especially conversation, but I always said "later." Finally, when I came to Canada I couldn't understand anything on the first day in ELSA class at New Directions. I decided when I went home each day I would review what I learned in class. After two weeks, the class became the joy of my life because

I was able to understand what the teacher said and I also got a chance to know about my classmates. Friends from many countries, different cultures, law, the Canadian system of government, field trips, and useful information were enough to let me have fun in Canada. The atmosphere in ELSA class is very friendly and I can see people care about each other. I also try to be sensitive to other people's feelings. ELSA (New Directions) will be remembered as a place not only for learning English but also for giving me self-confidence. I sincerely give thanks to Corinne, Annemieka, Carol and Joanne who try their best for all the students.



Regional News

Social Inclusion: A Community-based Experience

By Penticton & District Multicultural Services staff

Building bridges between generation gaps can be challenging at the best of times. But add to that language barriers, cultural and generational gaps, and busy schedules and you have the beginnings of a program called Through Your Eyes, An Immigration Experience.

The purpose of this program was to create bridges between the generations while at the same time highlighting culture, communication, and knowledge and understanding. An elder's personal journey of immigration is shared with her teen partner using pictures and memorabilia. The teen takes this information and scans it into a computer program which is then built upon to create a picture/music DVD for the senior. Through this process, elders share their wisdom and knowledge, gained through experience, while youth share their technological skills.

It sounds simple enough, but to make it happen we have had to overcome numerous obstacles: timing, scheduling, securing computers and space and technical glitches just to mention a few.

This project was made possible through a partnership lead by the Penticton and District Multicultural Society and funding from the Service Canada New Horizons for Seniors Program. The partnership included Princess Margaret High School, the Sikh Temple and the Penticton Seniors Computer Club.

Classes were held in the club space, which houses multiple computer stations and state-of-the-art equipment. The Computer Club volunteers were extremely generous, assisting the teens and helping the participating seniors—many who had rarely ventured

outside their cultural community before—to feel comfortable in this new environment.

Princess Margaret High School counsellor Pam Storrie was instrumental in assisting us to get the word out to interested teens. Teens gain volunteer hours that count toward their graduation requirements, as well as certification from PDMS acknowledging their participation in the program. "All of this looks great in a student's portfolio," says Storrie.

Another aspect of this program was involving the Sikh community. Penticton has a large and growing population of Sikh elders and involving them meant securing

the assistance of our Settlement worker, Mandy Channa. Many of these seniors had never really become involved in the broader Penticton community before—but they did, bringing their pictures, their stories and their experiences to share with their teen partners. Seniors also learned some basic computer

skills as part of their involvement in the program. These seniors gained a sense of confidence and some of these same participants have since signed up for ELSA classes.

The Through Your Eyes Project has paired senior immigrants from Italy, Vietnam, the Netherlands, England, Germany, Greece, Pakistan, the Punjab and China with students of diverse backgrounds from Canada, Vietnam, Guatemala, Greece and India.

The partnerships, though at times challenging, helped to create an excellent community-building experience. The Penticton community and the program participants will all treasure and share the DVD Legacy of the immigration experience.



Participants in Through your Eyes, An Immigration Experience



Regional News

ELSA in the North

By Yukari Yamamoto, UNBC Practicum student at IMSS-PG

My name is Yukari Yamamoto and I am an international student studying Social Work at the University of Northern BC. As part of my practicum, I have been assisting with the ELSA program at IMSS Prince George. I am impressed. The class activities are engaging and meaningful, and the environment is friendly, helpful and respectful. The students are very eager to learn. I often hear the students have conversations using phrases and idioms they learned the day before, and they seem to be very happy with the progress they are making.

ELSA classes provide both a place to learn English and Canadian culture and a place to socialize and build sup-

port systems that are very important for immigrants, especially those living in the North. Living in the North as an immigrant means that one has a very small support network from one's home country or region, and it means that the ability to communicate in English is crucial to successful integration into the local community. One student said that before he enrolled in the ELSA program he used to stay home and do nothing, and he is glad that now he has something to look forward to every day. Having something to do other than just work is important.

As with social integration, successful integration into the labour force is another serious issue many immigrants face. Some of the ELSA students at IMSS-PG are either under-employed or unemployed, and it is very important for them to gain the language skills necessary to find a job. One student expressed his interest in obtaining a diploma in skilled trades, because he does not feel confident that his English is sufficient to pursue a career in his field of expertise. Currently there is no program in the North that offers advanced level English classes to help immigrants like him become job ready, but I believe there is a need for one. And such need will increase as the economy in the North evolves. During the short time I have been involved in the IMSS-PG program, I have come to see the great benefits it offers. In the future I hope the program will be expanded to meet the growing needs of the immigrants in Northern BC.



Yukari (third from left in front row) and ELSA students at IMSS

Publish Fiction for ESL Learners

Do you like to tell stories? Could you write original fiction for learners of English?

I am working on a project to develop a list of original graded fiction readers on behalf of Thomson, a major ESL publisher based in North America. We are currently casting our net out for writers who may be interested in submitting a proposal. Our aim is to create the best series on the market and we're going for strength of stories. A background in language teaching is helpful, but not absolutely necessary. Sometimes writers from different backgrounds make very good "reader writers."

If you would like to see a fuller document on the series and details about how to submit a proposal, please contact Sue Leather by e-mail sue@sueleatherassociates.com. www.sueleatherassociates.com.



From Our Community & Classroom

*A Day to Remember:
PICS staff
and
students
celebrating
International
Women's
Day on
March 8,
2006*



Women's Health Workshops

By Lisa Moore, Information Centre Director, Vancouver Women's Health Collective

Navigating the health-care system and making decisions about your own health can be a daunting task. This is particularly true for immigrant women. Many factors—including cutbacks in health services, a lack of information on how to access the system, the power dynamic between doctor and patient, and the experience of discrimination and abuse—can all combine to have a devastating impact on immigrant women's health.

The Vancouver Women's Health Collective offers workshops that help women gain information, skills, and the confidence necessary to make informed decisions about their own health. The workshops also help women regain a sense of their own expertise, and find ways to be good advocates for themselves and for each other.

The VWHC's workshops use popular education techniques, are accessible for English language learners, and can be adapted to meet the interests of each particular group of women. Currently, the VWHC offers workshops on the following topics:

- ◆ Women's rights in the health care system
- ◆ Routine women's health care: What to ask for and what to expect
- ◆ Menopause
- ◆ Women and depression
- ◆ Body image for girls
- ◆ Other women's health topics on request.

For more information, or to schedule a workshop, please contact the VWHC at 604.736.5262.



ELSA Net News

Reaching out to Other Organizations and Frontline ELSA Staff

By Erika Del Carmen Fuchs, ELSA Net

In recent board and regional meetings, as well as in informal conversation, we have been discussing the idea of ELSA Net making further linkages with other organizations. In order to better provide support to ELSA instructors, support staff, coordinators, childcare workers and assessors, as part of our core work, we want to draw out our own work as ELSA Net, but we also want to look out for those we might approach for resources and possible partnerships.

A new ad hoc committee is in the making to research into the development of appropriate external stakeholder communication linkages and opportunities for external partnerships and collaborations. Primarily, what are the types of linkages that would support our organizations and frontline staff?

This committee will also do some preliminary research as to how we can better respond to instructor/frontline staff and engage them in communication.

The ad hoc committee would advise me on research into both of these areas, further linkages and frontline worker support. In the initial phases of this work, we want to do a needs assessment, possibly by sending out a questionnaire to providers and frontline staff. We want to find ways to open up discussion among frontline workers as to how to provide a forum for their issues and provide them with more resources, perhaps using our own online discussion board.

As we embark on this project, I would like to ask those interested in participating on the committee to contact me. Most of the meetings will be in cyber-space, with some phone conversations. Participants from the regions are encouraged, as are those from the Lower Mainland, to ensure we look into and develop further linkages across the regions, as well as provide supports to frontline workers throughout the province. Instructors and other frontline staff, as well as coordinators, are encouraged to get involved. Please join us on this! You can contact me at elsanet2@telus.net.

ELSA Net's New Board

Lower Mainland Public

Franca Zumpano, Burnaby Continuing Ed
Dale Hunter, Vancouver Community College
Flairy Bubel, Richmond Continuing Ed - Alternate

Lower Mainland Private

James Harder, Vancouver Formosa Academy
Bernard Tang, Excel Education Centre
Sheryl Zehr, Burnaby English Language Centre - Alternate

Lower Mainland Non-Profit

Diana Smolic, Immigrant Services Society of BC
Nina Miller, MOSAIC
Susan Schachter, Little Mountain Neighbourhood House - Alternate

Surrey / Delta

Yvonne Chard, Delta Continuing Ed
Lenard Langlois
Devinder Chattha, Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society (PICS) - Alternate

Fraser Valley

Carla Bullinger, Abbotsford Community Services
Donna Lo, Chilliwack Community Services - Alternate

Vancouver Island South

Winnie Lee, Intercultural Association of Greater Victoria
Cindy Vaartnou, Victoria Read - Alternate

Vancouver Island North

Hilde Schlosar, Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society
Val Macdonald, Assessor - Alternate

East & South Central BC

Lloyd Loveday, Kamloops Cariboo Regional Immigrant Society
Jayne Aleck, Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society - Alternate

North & North Central BC

Lynn Letchford, Immigrant and Multicultural Services Society of Prince George
Marie Grinstead, Northwest Community College - Prince Rupert - Alternate

Assessors

Wes Schroeder, Western ESL Services
Vasso Vahlas, Surrey Language Assessment Centre - Alternate

Special thanks to out-going longtime board members Nita Jacob, Ming Berka, Val MacDonald and Marian McCarthy



New Resources For the Classroom

Book Review: *Touchstone 1*, Cambridge

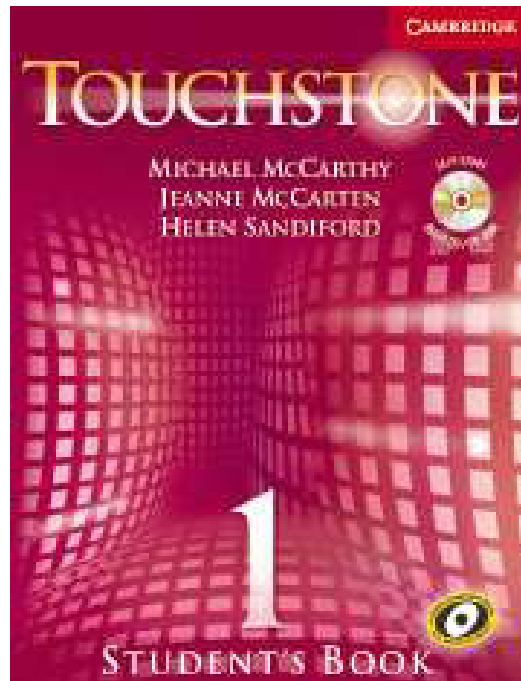
By Kathleen Graham, with input from North Road ELSA instructors-S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

Touchstone 1 is the first of a comprehensive new series aimed at adults and young adults. There are four levels available, each including a student's book, workbook, teacher's edition, and CD's (audiocassettes are also available). The themes, vocabulary, and structures covered would make it appropriate for a high level 1 or low level 2 ELSA class.

There has clearly been a great deal of input from people with classroom experience in creating the series. The teacher's edition text is quite thorough and might be a helpful framework for a new instructor. Although there isn't enough material to last through a typical monthly unit, there are four lengthy and progressive lessons per theme, each easily expanded, including complete lesson plans for each unit, with introductory, review and follow up activities, optional exercises, and homework suggestions. At the end of each unit there's a vocabulary notebook and unit tests, with oral and listening components, supported by assessment sheets with scoring guides. The teacher's edition is accompanied by CD's containing listening exercises and the listening portions of tests. Audio scripts, the answer key to the workbook, and space for teacher's notes are also included.

The student's book has very attractive photos and humorous, useful graphics. It includes a self study CD. One teacher compared the

books to the *Interchange* series, saying, "If you liked them, you'll probably like this." There are some excellent sections recurring within the units. Two we liked are 'Speaking Naturally,' focusing on natural pronunciation like linkage and 'In Conversation,' which graphically demonstrates which words are more often used in spoken English. ('Yeah' is ten times more common than 'yes'.) Also, there is 'Free



Talk' activity for each unit at the back of the book, (board game, class interview, find someone who, etc), which allows the students to manipulate the language learned in the unit.

We did have some serious issues with the student's book, however. There is a great deal happening on each page in terms of different types of information and changes in font and format, which we felt

could be distracting for many students. The first few pages of the student's book are an introduction to the series format and a comprehensive overview chart detailing the teaching components of the book. This is probably unnecessary in a student's book.

The general format of the workbook is more appropriate for the lower levels. It complements the student's book chapter by chapter and is in black and white, with much less happening on each page. It includes a self-study progress check at the end of each unit.

The two main concerns we had were with content and design. While the twelve units are all basic Level 1 themes, the overall content of the units seems aimed at younger adults in or planning on entering the workforce. Topics like office conversations, world travel and 'Are you an Internet addict?' are likely not applicable to the daily lives of many of our ELSA clients. On the other hand, many of our younger students might appreciate lessons that mention e-mail, MP3 players, and cell phones.

While *Touchstone 1* would be an ideal package for a group of young, work-oriented adults taught in a term-based system, its comprehensive nature, the inclusion of many useful conversational, listening and learning strategies and its emphasis on natural speech would likely make it a useful addition to your resource library. We also expect that many of the issues we have with the lower level text would be less of a concern with the higher level texts.



International News

Coming Full Circle in Guatemala

By Naomi Wolfe, Campbell River, ELSA Instructor

I first traveled to Guatemala as a university student in 1975, and I spent my first year there as an international student, studying Spanish, living with a Guatemalan family, and later doing research for the *Instituto Indigenista Nacional* alongside an Italian sociolo-

The teacher training opportunity arose last year through a connection with Josue, a close friend in the city of Quetzaltenango, Guatemala's second largest city, located amongst volcanoes at an elevation of 7,200 feet in the western highlands. I was making plans for my first visit back in fifteen years, and Josue had communicated with several English

where I had studied Spanish in Guatemala City thirty years before.

For that conference, which took place in August of last year, I developed and facilitated four two-hour workshops for local English teachers: *Managing a Multi-level Class*; *Grammar Games*; *Using Current Events and Tabloids to Generate*

Language; and *Using Music and Video in the ESL Class*.

Despite my initial butterflies, I was pleasantly surprised to discover that once in the classroom, many of my ESL teaching skills were transferable to workshop facilitation and teacher training. In addition, I found that the teachers who attended (ranging from 25-40 participants per workshop)



"Let's go to school!"—Conference Presenters from various countries going by school bus to conference site for the III Jornadas Pedagogicas, Fundacion Intervida, Nov. 2005.

gist and a cultural anthropologist in San Luis Jilotepeque, a Pocomam (Mayan) community. Little did I know then that I would spend ten years in Guatemala, and that during that time I would begin my career as an ESL teacher. And little did I imagine that thirty years later I would return to my second home to train teachers from communities where I had formerly taught.

schools on my behalf because I was hoping to do some kind of volunteer work while there. The next thing I knew, I was being invited by Brenda and Claudia (from IGA) to be a presenter at the first English teacher conference in Western Guatemala, organized by IGA, *Instituto Guatemalteco Americano*, coincidentally the same institute

were eager to learn and practice new teaching techniques with a Canadian twist. On the final afternoon I was approached by Maribel, one of the participants in my workshops. After raving briefly about what she had learned, she invited me to participate in another teacher conference through *Fundacion Intervida*.

I returned to Canada, but in Novem-



International News

ber I was on my way back to participate as a presenter at *Las III Jornadas Pedagógicas*, the third annual *Pedagogical Journey* (a teachers' conference) organized by *Fundacion Intervida*, a non-governmental integral development organization that promotes and coordinates activities and programs related to health, education, the environment, community organization, etc., with the goal of reducing the root causes of poverty. Presenters share their knowledge with local educators and acquire knowledge about the skills and needs of educators in different contexts. In addition, the presenters, educators from Spain, Mexico, Cuba, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Peru, Argentina, Guatemala, and Canada had a chance to meet and exchange ideas in a supportive environment which values diverse perspectives.

For me, the chance to return to Guatemala in this new capacity was like coming full circle; I was able to use the skills that I had begun to acquire in Guatemala almost thirty years before to assist teachers in the here and now. The eye-opening experience of working with an international team was unexpectedly life-altering, and the chance to interact in an academic environment in Spanish, my second

language, was inspiring.

Upon my return, I made the decision to pursue the field of teacher training, despite the fact that for several years I had been planning to leave the ESL field. Since then, I have begun my MA through the University of Leicester, UK, and have facilitated successful workshops at both the 2006 TEAL Conference and at Frontier College. More recently, I have been invited back to Guatemala for two weeks this year for the *IV Jornadas Pedagógicas*.

In closing, I hope my story will be an inspiration to those of you who have thought about sharing and expanding your knowledge and skills as ESL teachers in other meaningful ways. I stand in awe of the gifts that the ESL field continues to put in my path. As

we move into a future in which English is predicted to be one of three dominant world languages (Spanish and Chinese are the other two), I think it is significant to be involved in positive educational exchanges with educators and English teachers from other world regions. Our field is not just about the teaching of the English language; it also offers a multitude of opportunities to increase intercultural understanding across the globe.

For information about IGA, *Instituto Guatemalteco Americano*, go to www.iga.edu/main.php, and, for more information about *Fundacion Intervida*, go to www.intervida.org (for both, click on "English"). To contact me: telephone 250.923.7349 or e-mail nlwolfe@hotmail.com.



Naomi (second from left in front row) with participants in my "Out of the Box" course with *Fundacion Intervida* during the *III Jornadas Pedagógicas*, Nov. 2005



International News

2006 International Metropolis Conference: Re-thinking Migration

Timothy Welsh, Program Director, Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC (AMSSA)

I was funded by the Vancouver Metropolis-RIIM research centre (www.riim.metropolis.net) to travel to Lisbon for the 2006 International Metropolis conference as a BC immigrant settlement NGO representative.

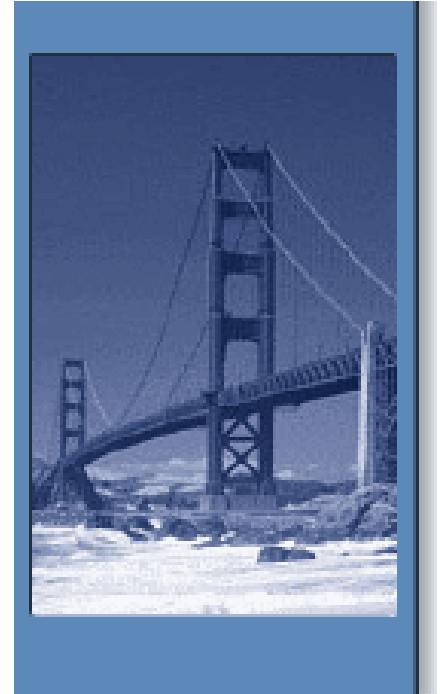
Lisbon is a beautiful city, accurately billed as a sort of a playground for grown-ups. Its history includes Celts, Romans, Moors, a Portuguese monarchy and empire, the establishment of a republic, large influxes from African colonies, and today sees a revived economy and organized immigration—including a recent move to establish very or-

ganized and integrated services for immigrants, refugees, and ethnic minorities. This website shows the Lisbon I saw: www.virtourist.com/europe/lisbon/index.html, although with the conference as my focus I missed a lot.

The main eye-opener theme that emerged from the conference for me is how nations' immigration policies are in many ways contrary to the realities of global labour markets and economics. "There is nothing more permanent than temporary migration"—developed countries grant only time-limited or illegal access to their labour markets and societies to migrants, most of whom want to stay permanently. In the US, Mexican male illegal workers have an employment rate of 96%. At the same time the higher

educated and wealthier migrants that are accepted permanently are increasingly those who choose to move back or move on.

Temporariness becomes permanence: second and third generation "temporary" or "illegal" migrants are in fact permanent parts of a number of developed nations. When this is finally understood and appropriate



policy responses are enacted, it is almost too late to effect positive social cohesion and equity. The impacts of this are obvious in major recent events. It was heartening to hear thoughtful politicians and academics from France, Portugal, Germany, the Netherlands, and other countries that are taking major positive steps to re-approach migration and integration.

While in many ways Canada was cited as a relatively positive example, our immigration policies are still facing major forces of globalization, mobility, inequality, security concerns, and the rise of new economic powers that are currently major immigration sources. Given our ongoing demographic challenges, our immigration policies may soon need to become more creative and flexible in how access is given and citizenship is shaped.



Community and Class Resources

New ISS Report: Faces of Refugees



Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISS) has recently released a report titled *Faces of Refugees: Settlement Patterns in the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) January 2003 - December 2005*. The report includes information about settlement patterns of Government-Assisted Refugees (GAR's). This includes statistics, as well as source countries of GAR's, and cities of settlement within the GVRD. Government-

assisted refugees from Afghanistan, Sudan, Iran, Colombia, and Indonesia figure among the top five refugee source countries. The report also includes some information on the entitlements of refugees, as well as the implications for refugees in the areas of education and health. To see the full report, go to the following link: www.issbc.org/newsletter/faces_of_refugees_6.pdf.

Canada Is Hiring Online Course

(from www.LearnJobSkills.com website.)

In the "Canada Is Hiring" course students will learn important skills and information:

1. Create a professional Cover Letter
2. Develop an effective Resume
3. An overview of the Canadian Job Market
4. Research where occupations are in demand in Canada
5. A full explanation of the Licensing requirements for occupations
6. Research a list of 50 employers that are hiring
7. Create a step by step Job Search Action Plan
8. Review Job Interview questions and answers
9. A salary report of what real employers are paying in Canada
10. Useful career tips that make a promotion that much easier

The objective of the Canada Is Hiring curriculum is to equip participants with the tools they need to conduct a successful job search.

Top Ten Qualities Employers Seek in Candidates

1. Communication Skills (verbal & written)
2. Honesty/Integrity
3. Teamwork Skills (works well with others)
4. Interpersonal Skills (relates well to others)
5. Motivation/Initiative
6. Strong Work Ethic
7. Analytic Skills
8. Flexibility/Adaptability
9. Computer/Technical Skills
10. Organizational Skills

(Source: National Association of Colleges and Employers, The Job Outlook for the Class of 2003)

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.



ELSA Net

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