



Parenting in a New Country

ELSA Net Spring 2009



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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

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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

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Update from the Ministry

Immigrant Integration Branch (IIB) Updates

Several initiatives, programs, and pilots are underway across the province. Some of the highlights include:

- The English version of the BC Newcomers' Guide to Resources and Services is now available and has been distributed to organizations across the province. The Guide will be translated into 10 other languages throughout 2009. An order form is available on the WelcomeBC website at www.welcomebc.ca.
- IIB contract managers conducted site monitoring with contracted organizations throughout the late fall and winter, in anticipation of contract renewal negotiations taking place this spring. Renewed contracts will be in place for July 1, 2009.
- The BCSAP Outcomes Evaluation report was released in March. The report highlights the success of BCSAP in meeting program outcomes and client needs, as well as making recommendations. The report can be accessed on the WelcomeBC website.
- Pilots for pre-literacy ELSA classes began in Feb. 2009. The pre-literacy pilot program is intended to target students who are illiterate in English and in their own mother tongue or who have had very low exposure to schooling. These pilots are taking place in Vancouver, Burnaby, New Westminster, Surrey and Langley.
- Successful proponents of the Request for Proposals (RFP) for demonstration projects for out-of-school immigrant youth were announced in March. The successful organizations include Abbotsford Community Services, Boys & Girls Club Community Services of Delta/Richmond, Immigrant Services Society of BC, Lower Mainland Purpose Society, MOSAIC, North Shore Multicultural Society, Pacific Community Resources Society, Coquitlam School District, Richmond Multicultural Concern Society, Vancouver Community College and Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre. The demonstration projects will provide integrated service systems to support young immigrants' re-entry into educational/training environments or entry into the labour market.
- The IIB is co-sponsoring 2 roundtable discussions this spring on how to better support immigrant and refugee women who are victims of domestic violence. They are tentatively planned for May in the Kelowna region and for June in Nanaimo. The roundtables will bring together Vancouver Island and Interior/Northern settlement/ELSA workers, victim services workers and transition house staff to learn from each other, identify needs and gaps, and recommend approaches to improve responsiveness to the issue of domestic violence in immigrant communities in smaller towns. Other co-sponsoring ministries include the Ministry of Attorney General, Ministry of Housing and Social Development and the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General.
- A Request for Proposals for Demonstration Projects to Support Senior Immigrants & Refugees was posted on BC Bid, and closed on March 25, 2009.
- A Request for Proposals for ELSA for the Workplace Program, Lower Mainland & Fraser Valley (formerly the ELSA LMF 4/5) was posted on BC Bid and closed on March 26, 2009. A document that summarizes the 2008 consultations that led to changes to the program elements is available through ELSA Net.
- The IIB and the ELSA Net Policy committee are glad to announce that an updated Operations Policy Manual for the Administration of the English Language Services for Adults (ELSA) Program is ready for sector-wide distribution in April/May 2009.

For more information, please contact Lily Grewal at 604-775-0674 or at lily.grewal@gov.bc.ca.



Message from the President



By Dale Hunter,
ELSA Net President

I'm pleased to be writing to the ELSA community as President of ELSA Net. It's been a privilege to be part of the ELSA Board over the last 4 years and meet interesting and capable people from ELSA providers all over the province. Being President creates even more opportunities, including sitting on a number of very interesting committees and task forces, where I'll be able to gain knowledge and make connections that can be shared with ELSA Net members.

I recently attended a meeting of the Joint Federal Provincial Immigration Advisory Council. The meeting agenda focused on 'ways we can minimize the scarring of recent immigrants in tough economic times.' I think this is an important focus for ELSA providers, and one that I plan to carry into the coming months.

At the Council meeting, an economist from BC Central Credit Union presented a stark picture of the economy and slow recovery over about 3 years, as well as a convincing demonstration that immigration numbers for BC need to be much higher than they are now to permit our economy to grow, with the implication that we need to treat our newcomers as a precious, essential resource.

I've also joined Brenda Lohrenz and Jean McCrae of our Board on the BCSAP Training Committee - this is a very productive committee which will help the Branch put some high quality resources and training opportunities in the hands of ELSA providers in the relatively near future.

As I come into the president's role, the energy level, commitment and optimism across our whole organization are high. ELSA Net staff have cranked things up several notches over the past year and the number and the scope of ELSA Net initiatives and projects that you'll see described in this newsletter will impress you. The mood is very good and I'm confident that ELSA Net and the ELSA Net Board are ready for whatever the year may bring.

ELSA Net Board of Directors 2009

Lower Mainland - Public

Marta Batory, Richmond Continuing Education
Dale Hunter, Vancouver Community College
Franca Zumpano, Burnaby Continuing Education - Alternate

Lower Mainland - Private

Christine Woods, New Westminster English Language Centre
Bernard Tang, Excel Education Centre
James Harder, Vancouver Formosa Academy - Alternate

Lower Mainland - Non-Profit

Katie Graham, SUCCESS
Nina Miller, MOSAIC
Diana Smolic, ISS - Alternate

Surrey / Delta

Devinder Chattha, PICS
Lenard Langlois, DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society
Ewa Karczewska, ISS - Alternate

Fraser Valley

Annemieke Vrijmoed, New Directions
Corinne Vooyo, Abbotsford Community Services - Alternate

Vancouver Island South

Jean McCrae, Intercultural Association of Greater Victoria

Vancouver Island North

Valerie Macdonald, Assessor
Jackie Martin, Cowichan Intercultural Society - Alternate

(continue on page 5)

ELSA Net Update from the Executive Director



By Brenda Lohrenz,
ELSA Net

Welcome to Our New Executive!

I'd like to start by welcoming Dale Hunter, the new ELSA Net Board President, and Nina Miller our Vice President. The ELSA Net staff greatly appreciates the knowledge and expertise these two individuals bring to their positions, and looks forward to collaborating with them on carrying forward the ELSA Net vision.

ELSA Net is excited to move forward with many new projects on the go.

Medical Emergencies and Community Health Resources Workshops and Videos

We were very pleased to hire some talented and experienced consultants to work on our medical emergency resources/training package, including a video project focusing on community health. Our top notch advisory committee includes HealthLink BC, Vancouver Coastal Health, BC Poison Control Centre, EComm and BC Ambulance Services-guaranteeing us up-to-date and relevant information for our students.

ELSA Net Board of Directors 2009

(continue from page 4)

East and South Central BC

Wanda Herman, Kamloops Cariboo Regional Immigrant Society
Hermien Loman, Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society - Alternate

North and North Central BC

Joan Haack, IMSS Prince George
Marie Grinstrand, Northwest Community College - Prince Rupert Campus - Alternate

Assessment Centres

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

ELSA Youth Curriculum

Another exciting project on the horizon for ELSA Net is a youth curriculum targeting ELSA students aged 17 to 24. Stay tuned in the coming months for more on this initiative.

ELSA Net E-Learning Portal

We would also like to take this opportunity to introduce our E-Learning Portal, which is a centralized location set up to give the ELSA Net community access to information, resources and discussion forums related to specific areas of interest. For more information on this exciting tool and the information that can be accessed by logging on, contact Colleen Rogan at resourcecoordinator@elsanet.org.

Discussion and Working Groups

Other areas of interest ELSA Net is currently working on include a discussion group on teaching multi-level classes and a working group dedicated to Instruction and Assessment.

ELSA Networking Events

This year, Literacy instructors, 4/5 instructors and 2/3 instructors met at 3 separate networking events. The events were a great success and instructors exchanged field trip, guest speaker and lesson ideas. They also talked about challenges and offered support to each other. If you are interested in joining any of our networking mailing lists or would like to host a networking event at your location, contact Colleen Rogan at resourcecoordinator@elsanet.org.





Feature Article

Facing Challenges and Building Best Practices - MOSAIC Childcare Centre

*By Nadia Rabierad, ChildCare Coordinator
MOSAIC - Language Center*

It seems like yesterday when I snuggled my youngest daughter's frightened face into my shoulder. My older daughter's tiny hands gripped my skirt and she cried for hours with wide, tearful eyes. She was acting brave, but actually hadn't eaten anything during the 24-hour trip taking us away from our home country. In my thoughts was the uncertainty of what would happen next to our small family. I was leaving my treasures behind and starting from scratch.

As immigrants we faced many challenges. There were language barriers and different social norms and values. But the major obstacle was choosing a childcare which would suit our situation.

Immigrant families face many barriers accessing early care and education. Unfamiliarity with the childcare system



and financial barriers make the situation even more complicated. Many children of immigrants face multiple risk factors for school failure. For children of immigrants, high quality child care and early education has the potential to address some of these risks by offering young children school readiness and English language acquisition opportunities.

Supporting families to access community resources and promoting parental involvement in education are our main goals at MOSAIC child care centre.

We were especially excited to start the lunch program as part of the Enhanced Childcare Program. Since September 2008 MOSAIC has been offering lunch-time parent education sessions and parent-child play sessions to current MOSAIC ELSA students. These one-hour sessions include a simple lunch, which is an added incentive for participants.

We regularly distribute information with a schedule of discussion topics, themes, and a sign-in sheet. We also approach each parent individually to learn about their interests and concerns. This informs planning for future sessions. MOSAIC ECE staff can speak a range of languages and come from many different countries. At present ECE staff can speak Mandarin, Cantonese, Japanese, Polish, Spanish, Farsi, Dari and Russian. Because of our diverse backgrounds, we have the capacity to provide clear and simple

Feature Article

verbal and written information for parent - child lunch time sessions.

We collect weekly feedback for our lunch time sessions from both staff and parents through communicating with parents, weekly staff meetings and by monitoring parent-child time session sign-in sheets. Positive feedback on both the play time sessions and the educational sessions lets us know that this program is a huge success!



MOSAIC has over 20 years experience providing child care services for immigrant parents attending settlement English classes. We currently have 25 children enrolled in the MOSAIC child care centre.



"When I come every Wednesday with my son, it is good for me and him. My son has changed; he understands English and likes his teachers. In my country the old people tell me if your child likes other people, it is good. They have a good heart. Every Wednesday, they teach me how to play, talk and listen with my son. They help me."
(Guardia - Mother)



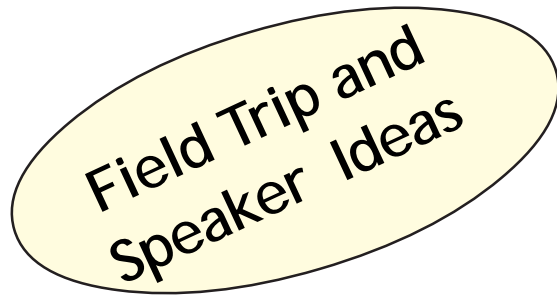
"Through Enhanced lunch programs, the staff at MOSAIC childcare have the opportunity to build valued relationships with parents. They exchange information and experience. They also provide support and knowledge related to parents' concerns and issues around children's learning and development." (Aldona - ECE)



"The program is very successful. Parents are lined up to sign-in!"
(Violet - ECE)



Resources



Ideas for Connecting with the Community

By Colleen Rogan



Parks & Recreation - Staying Active in the Community!

Visit the website *Found Locally* to get a list of Parks & Recreation or City website links.

<http://foundlocally.com/vancouver/Sports/Rec-ParksRec.htm>.

Here are some of the events I found while exploring the individual city sites:

New Westminster : New Westminster Walks-You can register in person at Centennial Community Center. Registration gives you a pedometer package and an access password to an on-line program that will help you chart your success.

Coquitlam: Explore the picnic areas with your students or check out Coquitlam Points of Interest. You'll also find several useful fact sheets in the Health and Safety section including Fire Prevention, RCMP - safety tips, Emergency Preparedness and more.

North Vancouver: Get Walking for Health Day! - A free event on Friday, May 8th and 14th and Lonsdale from 11 am - 1 pm

Workshops and Speakers for Parents

Burnaby Public Library FREE workshop for parents



For those of you in Burnaby, the Burnaby Public Library will visit your class free-of-charge and deliver a workshop on *Helping Your Child Get Ready to Read*.

To ask questions or book a workshop, please contact the Coordinator of Children's Services at 604-436-5415. To others outside of Burnaby - Check your local libraries to check if they have a similar program!

Burnaby Family Life Workshops



Burnaby Family Life offers a host of workshops for immigrant Families. Check their brochure to find classes relevant to your students and their children such as *Parenting for Immigrants* or *The African Children's Homework Club* at

<http://www.burnabyfamilylife.org>

Canadian Diabetes Association

The Canadian Diabetes Association can provide volunteers and staff who will visit classrooms and community organizations and deliver any one of their Diabetes Learning Series presentations listed at the link below, hand out accompanying resource information or answer basic questions about diabetes. To book a free presentation and for more information visit

<http://www.elsanet.org/news.html>

and see the PDF files about CDA.

Resources

The Class (Entre les murs)

By Colleen Rogan

The Class is a movie based on the book written by Francois Begaudeau, a middle school teacher and journalist. Playing himself (as French grammar teacher, Francois Marin) he takes us deep into the heart of a class of 14 and 15-year-old students who have come to Paris from a range of French speaking countries. Thrown together, the students and their teacher tackle issues of racism, cultural diversity, relationships



with parents and conflicts with the education system. The movie is scripted, but acted by a cast of "regular" middle school students (no real actors) which, in my opinion, gives the movie its real bite. As a teacher with experience in both adolescent and adult classrooms, I found myself moved to tears at the real life dilemmas that remain unsolved, the relationships that often take wrong turns, despite the best of intentions, and the small successes celebrated. And, as in reality, there is no one person that emerges as the hero. This movie is a must see for anyone passionate about teaching.

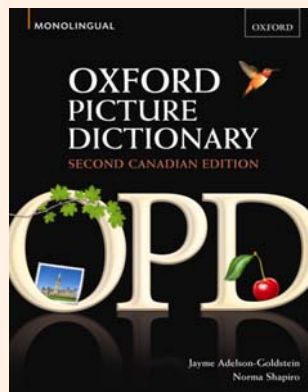
To view movie trailers, go to:

[The Class: movie review – OrlandoSentinel.com](#)

[The Class: Powerful French classroom film | Tampa | Movies | Movie Reviews](#)

The New Edition of the Oxford Picture Dictionary

By Hayley Dagleish



For years, the first Canadian edition of the *OPD* has been the industry leader among picture dictionaries. The second edition expands on the topics covered, providing more depth of vocabulary

in areas that matter most to students. The illustrations are completely updated in a more realistic style that is visually appealing to adult learners.

The second edition also contains two new features: Introductory Pages and Story Pages. The Introductory Pages are added to the beginning of each theme to give lower-level students a basic overview of key vocabulary words. They also give a starting point for discussion and an introduction to the theme for more advanced students. The Story Pages consist of a two-page spread at the end of each theme to help students use the words in context and practise their reading skills.

The *OPD* is designed for use both in and out of the classroom. Speaking exercises are presented throughout the *OPD* to allow students to practise new vocabulary in pairs or small groups, while the pronunciation guide in the index allows students to check their pronunciation when they are studying on their own.

Cyber Space



Cyber Space

by Colleen Rogan

Raising children in a new country can be challenging for many immigrant parents. In addition to the language difficulties, parents have to navigate new day care, school systems, parenting styles and ideas about discipline. Here are some downloadable and online resources related to parenting in a new country to help you support parents in ELSA classrooms and childcare centres:

- This kit has lots of useful information for new immigrant parents. It's great for higher level students.

[Settlement.Org: Resource Kit For New Immigrant Parents](#)

- This brochure on Early Years Development is available in English and 22 other languages.

[Settlement.Org](#) Links to: <http://www.gov.on.ca/children/oeyc/en/library/index.html>

- Positive Parenting Package - Children's Aid Society.

<http://www.oacas.org/childwelfare/parentingpkg.pdf>

- Useful guidelines for leaving children home alone.

[Settlement.Org Links to: http://www.durhamcas.ca/supervisionguidelines.php](http://www.durhamcas.ca/supervisionguidelines.php)

- Child Welfare League of Canada - Parenting in Canada brochure.

[Settlement.Org Links to: http://www.cwlc.ca/pubs/parenting_e.htm](http://www.cwlc.ca/pubs/parenting_e.htm)

- A list of discussion ideas to get you and your class started talking about parenting.

[ESL Conversation Questions - Parenting \(I-TESL-J\)](#)

- This handbook is from the United States, but worth looking at and adapting.

<http://www.brycs.org/documents/RaisingChildren-Handbook.pdf>

- Tips for Reading with Your Children - also available in 25 other languages

<http://www.bpl.burnaby.bc.ca/gab/documents/English.pdf>

- See our New ELSA Net Childcare page!

http://elsanet.org/links_childcareworkers.html



From Our Members

Talking About Parenting

by Geeta Jonathon (SUCCESS)

Love, food and parenting are probably three topics that unify people across cultures. In fact, no matter where they come from, people agree on one thing; they want the best for their kids. Keeping this in mind, ELSA-3 students at SUCCESS, Surrey enjoyed working on posters listing some parenting tips. The topic generated a lot of cross-cultural exchange and laughs as students shared their disciplining methods. They agreed and disagreed amicably and came up with many similar ideas. Everyone agreed that good parenting skills are essential for the betterment of society.



Help for New Parents

By Hussain Luaibi

Evening teacher at MOSAIC English Language Centre



(Martin and Sonia playing together!)

My wife, Anna, from Russia, gave birth to our little Martin on February 22, 2008. It is challenging to raise a child and needs a lot of patience. Sometimes the work seems endless. But, when I come home exhausted from work, the feeling soon disappears once I see Martin's beautiful smile. Then, it is really rewarding.

Last month I took a course about parenting because parenting is a new thing for me and sometimes it is frustrating. The course I took is called *Nobody's Perfect Parenting*. The main idea taught in this course is how to control yourself when you are caring for your baby. What makes the course special is the fact that the participating parents discuss problems with each other. I received a lot of useful information which I wasn't aware of before. What attracted my attention most was a couple from Turkey. They had some hard work ahead because, apparently, they had never said "no" to their child and needed to rethink that! I wish them success. Meeting parents like the ones I saw in the course has enriched my short experience in dealing with our son.

I have fun singing and dancing and making a lot of funny faces to make Martin happy. Actually, it makes me happy too. It probably triggers the big child in me. Now, my wife has a lot of work because she has two babies: little Martin and a beautiful cat, Sonia, who is one year older than Martin.

For more Nobody's Perfect Parenting Program information go to:
<http://bccf.bc.ca/hm/inside.php?sid=76&id=303>



From Our Members

Great Teaching Ideas from ISS

*By Dianne Jeffries and Jovanaka Suvajac,
Pre-literacy Pilot Project instructors from ISS*

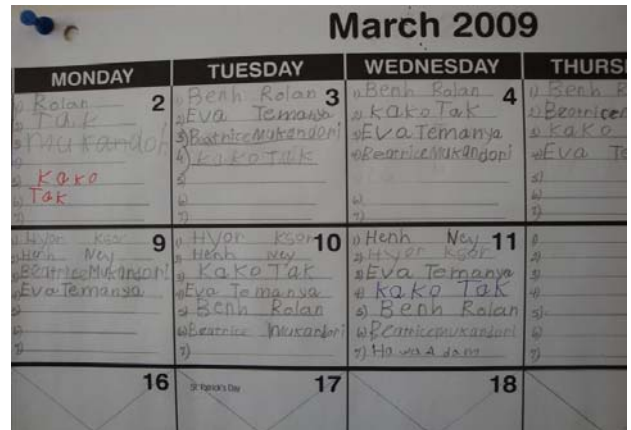
The Pre-literacy class in New Westminster was working on writing addresses on envelopes and buying stamps at the post office. We had been working on recognizing the school address, memorizing it, and writing it down on an envelope. The purpose of this was to learn the spatial awareness of writing an address on an envelope and making sure the letters



were legible enough for the postal worker to read. The idea to host a party in our class came about after speaking to Janet Massaro, the Pre-Literacy Pilot Project coordinator. We discussed what I was doing in the class and ways to incorporate this into the broader community. I produced an invitation that we reviewed in class. As a group we decided on the time of the party and wrote the address of the party on the invitation. Each student did one part: One wrote the time, another wrote the address of the party, another wrote on the envelope. Then, all students signed the letter.

We had already visited the post office so I brought a stamp for the class. We did a role play on buying the stamp. We then posted the invitation.

For the party, the students were keen to bring something to eat from home. The teacher from our Vancouver site, Jovanka, and students arrived at 10:30 and then we sat down to eat. After that we played some games with a ball and gave the students a tour of the school. I had taught the students how to introduce themselves, so they were able to practice with Jovanka's students. Jovanka's class left at about 11:30. It was a great success. Students met new people, practiced their oral and written English, relaxed and had a few laughs. We plan to have another party at the end of the term.



I created *the sign-in calendar* to establish a classroom routine—an important aspect of classroom readiness. Students started with the practice of signing in with their first name only. They have now progressed to signing in with their full names (properly spaced on lines). They seem to enjoy arriving early in order to write their names on the calendar. This daily practice also reinforces the proper directionality of writing (from left to right). Notice how much they have improved!



This idea of a student-created alphabetical word wall came from *Making It Real: Teaching Pre-Literate Adult Refugee Students*, Tacoma Community House Training Project. This is an entertaining way for students to review and practice vocabulary learned each week. First each student is given a word to put on the wall under the correct letter. Then we practice phonetics. For example, I point to a letter and elicit the name. Students answer with the correct letter of the alphabet. Then I ask for the sound and they answer in chorus. Finally I ask students to pronounce all the words under a letter.

Every other day, I randomly point to a letter and ask for the name and sound (or I ask a student to show me for example, the letter *M* or the sound /m/). As students arrive in the morning, they copy the words into their own notebooks. This way students gain a sense of progress from the growing list of words they know.

From Our Members

Film Festival at Excel Educational Centre

by Paul Naismith

Thursday, March 12th was a memorable day at Excel Education Centre in Richmond.

For six weeks prior to this date, instructor Kate Reynolds' ELSA level 5 class and my own level 5 class had worked hard on preparing films about subjects close to their heart as part of the media studies unit. We had asked the students to make a short documentary about issues that affected their community or people who had made their mark in their neighbourhood. On March 12th, the students shared their work with the school in a film festival and the creators of the top two films, as voted by the students, received prizes for their efforts. The results were impressive.

Some examples included a film about the success of a Kung Fu artist who had made his mark on the sport in Richmond through vigorous training. Some films were light-hearted. There were mockumentaries, such as a hilarious film about ESL teachers and the difficulties they face as second language teachers. I could not help but laugh out loud at some of my own idiosyncrasies (We have to laugh at ourselves sometimes!). Another group promoted the natural beauty of Richmond and provided gorgeous personal photos of their trips to various parks in the city.

Other films were more serious in nature such as the group who promoted recycling, reusing, and reducing. This film is explosive as it incorporates ghastly photos of landfills bursting with non-degradable plastic bags and containers. The film provides alternatives to wastefulness showing how using fashionable eco-friendly bags and refillable bottles contribute to a sustainable environment.



Another film questions the integrity of the media and interviews students for their opinion, while yet another film focuses on homelessness in Vancouver.

But what impressed me, as much as the topics and creativity of the students' films, was the language. Students mimick the question intonation of newscasters, they ensure that their grammar is perfect, and they speak out loud knowing that appropriate volume is essential for filming. The dialogue is expressive, new vocabulary is attempted, and their body language exudes confidence. One group wrote a poem for their film, a first for my class.

We, as ELSA instructors, continually bring the outside world into the classroom in order to provide students with Canadian content. Yet, when the students bring their Canadian world into the classroom, the results are just as productive. As observed by Reynolds and me, student filmmaking enhances language learning, making it more meaningful and enjoyable. The films brought about critical discussion and students left the school feeling proud of their accomplishments and their ability to effectively speak English in front of their peers. If you are fortunate enough to have digital cameras and a computer lab at your school, I encourage you to ask your students to document their community and challenge themselves.

If you wish to contact me about the computer programs used to make the films, or any other questions, please contact me at npaul@interchange.ubc.ca



From Our Members

South Okanagan Immigrant & Community Services Goes High Tech!

*By Hilma LaBelle,
Executive Director of South Okanagan
Immigrant and Community Services*

Located in the sunny Okanagan Valley and serving a city, 4 small towns and several remote & rural villages I saw a challenge. Our Immigrant clients are spread far and wide and we needed a cost effective mechanism to ensure that all immigrants were receiving optimum support in an equitable fashion. My husband had worked previously for the South Peace School District in IT support and is a computer (Macintosh platform) expert. A new, high-profile building opportunity, sparked interest from Board members, volunteers, instructors and students. We visited a local privately owned school and noticed that their grade 2 & 3 students were using a *SMARTboard* with ease.

SMARTboards are interactive whiteboards. Students and teachers can manipulate the images and the board itself comes with loads of downloadable software that makes lesson planning and curriculum development a breeze. The board "mirrors" your computer screen, so basically anything you do on your computer can be seen on the board. The boards are easy to read. Teaching computer usage and software programs is easy. For our neighbours in small townships, we can video conference directly from our desktops using AOL (AIM) Software. This, of course, increases our staff's ability to connect AND its free! Students in Oliver can participate in a guest speaker session held in Penticton. If the speaker only has one day to attend there's no need to miss out. Computers are in 2 platforms - Macintosh OSX and Windows XP. We also offer computer assisted language



learning programs such as ELLIS, keyboarding skills programs (All The Right Type) and teachers and students can go to iTunesU for amazing free downloadable lessons and podcasts.

For demonstrations on how to use Smart Boards, go to:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=319sEUWZ6zk&NR=1>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4tVUcZZRBI&feature=related>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nR_okRhiiOg&feature=related

Guest speaker David Desautels, of Legal Services Society, uses SMARTboard showing multi-level ELSA students how to navigate the LSS website.

From Our Members

Our Students

My Volunteer Experience

By Elizabeth Cimoszko, ELSA 5 student at SUCCESS

My name is Elizabeth, and I'm an immigrant from Poland. I would like to share my story about a recent volunteer experience. In Poland volunteering isn't popular, so for me the first time doing this was very scary, yet also very nice.

This past February I volunteered at the 2009 Diversity Health Fair, sponsored by the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of British Columbia (AMSSA). My responsibilities included encouraging young people to stop by a table to participate and talk about their favourite sport. I would also ask them to write a short essay or create some artwork about their favourite sport or athlete.

A few days after the fair ended I was asked to return to the Croatian Community Centre (where the fair was held). This time I worked in an office, preparing forms for a mail out about the health fair, as well as stuffing and stamping envelopes.

Now I am eager to continue my volunteer efforts and gain more Canadian experience. I like Canada and its system of volunteering. I'm a person who wants to help others. I have applied for another job as a volunteer at my ELSA school in Surrey. I would like to work in the front office. This job would give me a chance to meet new people and help me to improve my communication and language skills.

Finally, I would like to thank my ELSA instructors. When I started at Level 3, I could barely speak and there was much that I didn't understand. Now I've improved to Level 5 and can write about what I feel and how I enjoy it very much. I would also like to specifically thank Helesia and Catherine from Ethos Strategy Group and Melissa from the Croatian Community Centre. They have given me encouragement and hope for the future.



Teachers' Notes: Students Volunteering in the Community

Margaret Chan (ELSA teacher, SUCCESS)

My ELSA 4 & 5 students were on the topic of "Employment" when the opportunity to volunteer at the Diversity Health Fair came about. Six students went by themselves to the intake session while I stayed in class with the new students and those who couldn't go. I was told by the organizer that everything went extremely well because the volunteers showed a lot of initiative at the office. I went with the second class to volunteer the day before the fair. Again, a couple of students led the assembly work efficiently and effectively. The students indicated later that the volunteer work had been a new experience for them. They were glad to have helped and would do so again. They would love an opportunity for more challenging work and more listening and speaking on the job.

Jeff Graham (ELSA teacher, SUCCESS)

Seven ELSA 5 students from China, Korea, Poland and Vietnam faxed applications to the Diversity Health Fair and were accepted. They attended an orientation session prior to the fair, and a few participated in a follow-up session a few days after the event. These students performed a variety of jobs at the fair, including greeting visitors, providing security, interviewing guests as part of a formal survey, assisting at a food demonstration, and helping certain exhibitors. I was able to observe several of them in operation during the fair, and came away impressed with their enthusiasm and eagerness to help. Later in my own follow-up conversations with these students after the fair, they told me that they enjoyed their experience and would welcome an opportunity to do even more challenging work in the future.



From Our Members

Our Students

Let it Snow! Let it Snow! Let it Snow!

*By Joyce Bergen,
ELSA Instructor
ISS - Coquitlam*

Wei Xiu and her husband, Jian Kang, joined my literacy class in July 2008, having arrived in Canada from Shang Hai, China in 2006. I quickly realized that both of them were very creative, artistic people. Jian Kang is a gifted graphic artist, and Wei Xiu is a talented singer and dancer.

Just before the Christmas break, I was teaching my class about winter in Canada, and because we were enjoying the first snowfall of the season, it seemed appropriate to demonstrate how to fold and cut paper snowflakes. All the students enjoyed the activity, and with a touch of glitter glue, their snowflakes were really quite lovely.

What a delightful surprise greeted me and the rest of the class when Wei Xiu returned after the Christmas break with her collection of exquisitely cut tissue paper snowflakes! Each one of her snowflakes was unique and intricate -true works of art. Wei Xiu's creativity evolved into other designs as well: maple leaves, palm trees, and baskets of flowers, to name a few!

Like many other students in my class, WeiXiu had never seen snow before moving to Canada, and in a matter of a few weeks, she has become an expert on the intricate wonder of a single snowflake. As I think about each of the students in my class, I wonder what other talents hidden, lie waiting, perhaps longing, for opportunities to be expressed.



From Our Community

National Metropolis Conference

By Paula Mannington,
ELSA Program -
Abbotsford Community Services

It was great to participate in the 11th National Metropolis Conference, which took place March 19th-22nd in Calgary, Alberta. Approximately 900 delegates, including policy makers, researchers, business leaders, and community service providers, from across Canada and beyond, participated in the conference. A wide range of thought-provoking plenary sessions, workshops, and round tables focused on themes of immigration, integration, and diversity. The presentations captured an extensive cross-section of perspectives, issues, statistics, challenges, and successes and many opportunities arose for both the formal and informal exchange of ideas. It was an exhilarating networking experience.

The particular lens through which I apply new information to my own work in the ELSA program

and with multi-barriered families is shaped by the immigrants and refugees I teach who have low levels of language, literacy and numeracy. Accordingly, one of the most meaningful workshops for me was "*Promoting the Full Integration of Immigrants with Low Literacy*". In addition to discussing some of the barriers faced by this population, the presenters also considered innovative programs that focus on potential. For example, the *Childcare Training for Low Literacy Immigrant Women Project* in Alberta addresses labour market needs while helping a marginalized group of learners gain access to meaningful

employment. The positive outcomes of these and other projects designed for this underserved population are largely attributed to the use of a holistic approach.

It was inspiring to discover growing support for services that respond holistically to families with the greatest needs.

Overall, the conference was highly informative with many suggestions for best practices, promising initiatives, and useful resources for participants to take home. It was an enlightening four days and I look forward to Vancouver hosting the National Metropolis Conference in 2011.



BC TEAL's 41st Professional Development Conference,
"The Theory Practice Cycle: Perspectives on English Language Teaching"
is coming soon - May 8 & 9th



Some highlights of this year Conference include the following:

- Our Keynote Speakers, Kenneth Reader (UBC) and Kelleen Toohey (SFU)
- A Plenary Panel discussing the impact of Theory on Practice in Teacher Education
- More presentations and workshops on topics ranging from teaching methodologies to administration
- The Friday Night Wine and Cheese: a great opportunity to catch up with friends and colleagues
- An event honouring the late Mary Ashworth, who spent her life as a pioneer educator in our field

Please encourage your colleagues to attend and help make our 41st Annual Conference a memorable one!

To register for the Conference and find more information, please go to www.bctéal.org.



From Our Community



Centre for
Canadian Language
Benchmarks

Centre des niveaux de
compétence linguistique
canadiens

Update from the CCLB

It has been a busy few months at the CCLB. Here are some of the activities you may want to know about:

National Consultation on the CLB/NCLC –The National Consultation on the Canadian Language Benchmarks(CLB)/Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens (NCLC) is well underway. The consultation will bring together a range of perspectives from a variety of programs and organizations from sessions held across the country with ESL/FSL practitioners and many stakeholders who use the Canadian Language Benchmarks. The consultation process has been developed with a strong orientation toward developing a shared

understanding of how the CLB and the CCLB can best evolve to meet current and future needs. In B.C., group sessions with key stakeholders have already been held in Vancouver and Victoria. ESL practitioners have a further opportunity to provide feedback on the CLB and related resources by participating in the online survey that will be available on the CCLB website April 22 - May 30. The National Consultation will continue to March 2010. It is funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and the governments of Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario.

For more information, visit www.language.ca or contact the National Consultations Coordinator at consultations@language.ca.

New Resources for Essential Skills - The CCLB has developed some new resources for Essential Skills. The three guidebooks in English and French are as follows:

<p>Language for Work: CLB and Essential Skills for Job Analysts</p>	<p>Language for Work: CLB and Essential Skills for Trainers</p>	<p>Language for Work: CLB and Essential Skills for ESL Instructors</p>

From Our Community

In addition to the guide-books, the CCLB has developed a series of CLB/ Essential Skills sample lesson plans aimed at lower level language learners (CLB 1 - 7) which incorporates the Essential Skills, focusing on the transferability and development of (CLB) language-based, work-related skills. There is also a new tool that helps ESL teachers diagnose skill gaps in their learners. The *Essential Skills Primer: CLB Stage 1* has two components - the Diagnostic and the Skills Tables. The Diagnostic uses learner checklists to assist in determining learner needs, while the Tables help determine tasks and objectives for lesson planning. The project also allows for the delivery of workshops on each of the guidebooks. To date, CCLB has delivered four workshops on the ESL guidebook and resources in B.C.

For more information about this project, visit www.itsessential.ca or contact Colette Pepin at cpepin@language.ca. The project is funded by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION
ASSOCIATION OF BC
Teacher and Student Conference
May 7-8, 2009

**Culturalizing the Curriculum:
How To, Why To, What To Adjust For
In a Diverse Classroom**



The College of New Caledonia &
The Prince George Native
Friendship Centre,
Prince George, BC, Canada

This year's conference theme - "Culturalizing The Curriculum: How To, Why To, What To Adjust To In A Diverse Classroom" - recognizes the many different cultures in an adult classroom: gender, language, age, technological ability, and background being only a few.

Please email August Horning at literacy@pgnfc.com or Nita Jacob at hog.hollow@hotmail.com for further information.



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