



# NEWSLETTER

*Fall 2014 | Issue 29*

# Blended Learning

## Feature Article

Blended Learning for LINC Programs

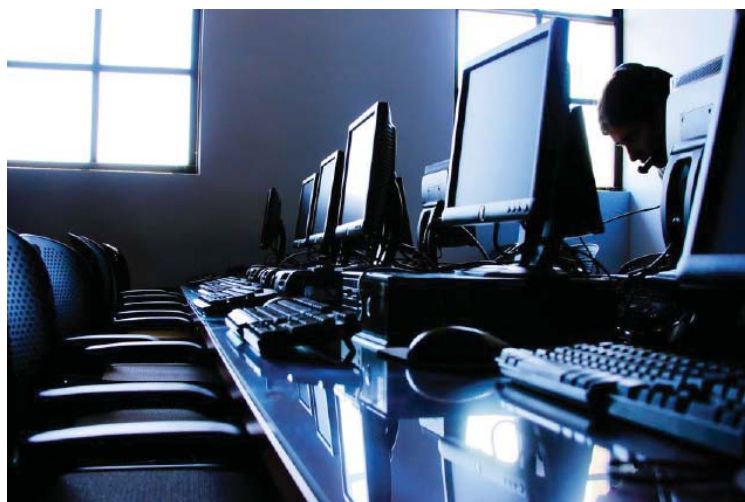
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## Our Mission

LISTN 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

The LISTN Newsletter is available in PDF format on the LISTN website: [www.listn.info](http://www.listn.info).

Contributions to future editions of the LISTN Newsletter are welcomed at [resources@listn.info](mailto:resources@listn.info).

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# LISTN Update

## Message from the Executive Director

*Brenda Lohrenz, LISTN*

On November 4/5, CIC held its first BC-Yukon Integration Summit. Roughly 180 participants were there to identify and address common barriers, as well as to provide input into shaping future BC and Yukon Settlement Policy and Programming.

Through the webinar, a number of you may have heard the plenary speakers who emphasized a swiftly evolving landscape. Chris Friesen from ISSofBC brought forward some startling facts - in 2013 we may have seen a slight decline in landings (36,211 in 2013 or 14.4% of Canada's overall), but International Student numbers at 74,000 doubled that number. Every year since 2008, BC has accepted more temporary foreign workers (TFW) than permanent residents; and in 2013, BC received 21.7% of all TFW entries to Canada. Humanitarian immigration has dropped, and we are looking at potential settlement policy reform, a new express entry system and all the opportunities that an increasingly technological world brings.

These revelations were surprising, but there's more. In my language perspective overview I reviewed government of BC 2012/13 data (<http://www.data.gov.bc.ca/>) that indicated domestic ESL via our public post-secondary institutions (PPSIs) amounted to 9,455 students (20% are Canadian citizens) with about half that number going through Vancouver Community College. As domestic ESL programs through PPSIs face drastic cuts in provincial funding, even our language landscape is about to go through a challenging transformation.

Recent literature asserts that "Skills in an official language (English or French) significantly affect the economic integration of Canada's immigrants, including their employment levels and incomes" (Derwing and Waugh, 2012. Institute for Research on Public Policy (IRPP) Study, no. 31, May 2012, <http://irpp.org/research-studies/study-no31>). Apart from employment opportunities the impact language has on daily life is vast - affecting access to services, intercultural relationships, community and civic engagement, and the list goes on. Diane Mikaelsson, CIC Director General Western Region, affirmed that "it

takes a community to integrate a newcomer." And how does a sense of belonging factor in? Lori Wilkinson, researcher and University of Manitoba Sociology professor, indicated that BC scored 10-15% lower than other provinces in newcomers' sense of belonging, particularly with women. She emphasized that language and connection make a difference. How do we address isolation in the face of increasing social networking and less human contact? This was also underscored in a 2012 Vancouver Foundation study. Follow this link to learn more: <http://bit.ly/1ubVKZG>. The

report's executive summary indicates that after polling 275 charitable organizations across metro Vancouver, "what people said concerned them the most was a growing sense of isolation and disconnection. They said we live increasingly in silos, separated by ethnicity, culture, language, income, age and even geography. They lamented what they saw as a deepening civic malaise that has resulted in more people retreating from community activities." So this sense of disconnect is not limited to our newcomer population. Lori also affirmed that BC residents were the #1 users of social networks in the country. Our technological world is speaking, now how do we respond?



*Plenary Panel - Settlement Overview and Trends with Chris Friesen speaking on behalf of the Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector Alliance  
Photo credit - Lisa Herrera*

(continuing on page 4)

# LISTN Update

The top immigration class to BC by far is family class at 14,000, with BC averaging 30% family class arrivals compared to 25% for the rest of Canada. Thus it is certainly families we are integrating, not just economically-focused individuals. This landscape demands a plan that encompasses a broad continuum of services for clients that may include anyone from pre-school children to seniors, with a need to be mindful of a growing trend towards technology that appears to heighten the perception of social isolation. This is where it becomes important to carefully consider the subject matter of our current newsletter. There are pros and cons to both online and blended learning, but done in the right way, with adequate supports and consistent live interaction, language learning can be more accessible for those who otherwise would not be able to fully participate in face to face classes. Our newsletter thus looks to bring forward some best practices, as well as to ask some critical questions related to this topic.

Certainly in an attempt to dig deeper, the summit allowed for some compelling conversations. On the language side we focused on Barriers to Language Acquisition, which considered systemic barriers such as poverty and access to services, including mental health supports. We also delved into the challenges that literacy learners face as they develop learning strategies while negotiating a demanding environment filled with written script and high expectations (consider the impact of citizenship criteria on this group for instance). The regional voices also spoke clearly: we see increasing changes to our rural communities, now the recipient of newcomers and a proliferation of temporary foreign workers. This requires a substantial investment, which includes integrated community supports coupled with a need for more inclusive environments.

Following on the heels of that discussion came a Workplace Language session. Paula Mannington, the program manager at Abbotsford Community Services, referred to the area that couples language/skills training and other employment related supports as “fertile grounds that beg for more intentional exploration.” VCC,

through their ESL Pathways project, provided a best practices example that creates access to workplace, academic and community integration while offering a provincially-recognized credential.

Although there were too many to review in depth here, during the course of two days we also had dialogues related to welcoming communities, inclusive workplaces, child and youth issues, vulnerable groups, including immigrant women, seniors and refugees, and employment access related topics. (See all presentations at <http://www.bcyukonintegrationsummit.ca/resources/>.)

We can't expect to solve all related policy, programming and social concerns in a two-day period, but everyone certainly participated with heartfelt effort. LISTN was also proactive in pre-Summit discussions in consideration of how we as language professionals can support our students while coping ourselves with a rapidly evolving field and sector. This definitely warrants ongoing discussion, so please visit <http://bit.ly/1ypFvfU> for our post-summit submission and let me know your thoughts.



*Paula Mannington of Abbotsford Community Services and Tanis Sawkins of VCC  
Photo credit - Lisa Herrera*

The Province has proclaimed November 16-22 as EAL Week in BC; let's focus on what we do in our profession that supports so many in very tangible ways. The BC TEAL Lower Mainland Regional conference on November 22 is doing just that by 'Celebrating Learner Success'. But EAL week also provides an opportunity to speak out in support of EAL colleagues involved in public post-secondary delivery and the importance of student pathways leading to academic study, trades, and credentialing. As our world becomes smaller, we are enriched in so many ways. I am gratified to know that we all not only understand the importance of developing that sense of belonging in our communities, but are helping to create it as well.



# Feature Article

## Blended Learning for LINC Programs

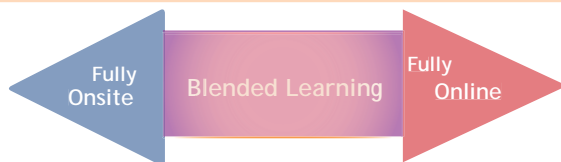
by Kathryn Rockwell, LISTN

### What is blended learning?

It is curious that discussions of educational technologies and blended learning can be fairly divisive. Some of us are early adopters of technology who jump into blended waters with both feet; sometimes losing our pedagogical footing in our zeal to use the latest thing; we may demonstrate “excessive awe”<sup>1</sup> towards the potential of new technologies. Others of us are wary of these discussions, in part because technology intimidates us, and in part because we fear that the relationships formed in the onsite classroom, which are integral to language learning, will be devalued in the move to online learning. We may demonstrate “exaggerated fear.”<sup>2</sup> So what are we in awe or fear of?

*“Blended learning is a formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through delivery of content and instruction via digital and online media with some element of student control over time, place, path or pace.”<sup>3</sup>*

*“[B]lended learning assumes the continued use of face-to-face teaching as a basic building block of the learning experience, enriched and enhanced by the integration of the Internet and other teaching and learning technologies into studies undertaken both in and out of the classroom.”<sup>4</sup>*



The good news for the fearful is that blended simply offers a systematic way to extend teaching and learning opportunities to the digital world. A good blended teacher is a good teacher first!

The good news for the technologically enthusiastic is that there are myriad technologies and software applications that make this possible: Moodle, Wikispaces, Google Drive/Hangout, Blackboard, and more. A good blended teacher is a regular user of technologies.

Somewhere between awe and fear, we find the LINC administrators, teachers and students—whose stories of blended learning you will read in these pages. Through trial, error and hard work, they have succeeded in finding a blend that works for them. So what can we learn from their experiences?

<sup>1</sup>Bax, S. (2011). Normalisation Revisited: The Effective Use of Technology in Language Education. *International Journal of Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Teaching*, 1(2), 1-15. Retrieved from [http://www.academia.edu/3754724/Normalisation\\_Revisited\\_The\\_Effective\\_Use\\_of\\_Technology\\_in\\_Language\\_Education](http://www.academia.edu/3754724/Normalisation_Revisited_The_Effective_Use_of_Technology_in_Language_Education).

<sup>2</sup>ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Blended learning. (2014, October 28). Retrieved November 13, 2014, from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blended\\_learning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blended_learning)

<sup>4</sup>Marsh, D. (2012). *Blended Learning Creating Learning Opportunities for Language Learners*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

### Blended Learning Glossary

**ASYNCHRONOUS LEARNING:** self-directed online learning conducted anytime, anywhere

**BLENDED LEARNING:** a combination of online and onsite learning

**COURSEWARE:** any instructional software delivered on a computer

**DISTANCE EDUCATION/DISTANCE LEARNING:** synchronous or asynchronous learning between teachers and students, mediated by digital devices, as done with LINC Home Study Canada

**INTERACTIVE MULTIMEDIA:** learning in which students provide input and receive feedback digitally, as done with SCORMs

**MOBILE LEARNING:** asynchronous learning mediated through students' hand held digital devices

**MOODLE (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment):** popular online learning management system allowing users to create an online classroom

**ONLINE LEARNING/E-LEARNING/WEB-BASED TRAINING:** any siteless course mediated via the Internet and digital devices

**SCORM (Sharable Content Object Reference Model):** a learning object allowing students to digitally interact with materials and receive feedback, as seen on Tutela

**SELF-PACED LEARNING:** learning that allows students to control the flow of the courseware

**SOCIAL MEDIA LEARNING:** learning through social platforms, such as Twitter, blogs, and Facebook, allowing learners to collaborate, provide input, and create and share content

**SYNCHRONOUS LEARNING:** online learning in which learners interact with the instructor and other students at the same time in different locations

**TUTELA:** the online community for ESL/FSL professionals

**VIDEO-CONFERRING:** learners/teacher interaction via video-conferencing tools such as Skype, Facetime, or Google+ Hangouts

**VIRTUAL CLASSROOM:** a software implemented, Internet mediated learning environment allowing student/teacher interaction

**WEBINAR:** a synchronous, web-mediated seminar, as with Big Blue Button (BBB) software, in allowing facilitator/participants interaction via webcams, microphones and chat boxes, often, recorded for future viewing

Adapted from Malamed, C. (2014, January 1). Glossary of Online Learning Terms. Retrieved October 14, 2014. <http://thelearningcoach.com/resources/online-learning-glossary-of-terms/>

# Feature Article

## Best Practices for Implementing Blended Learning in the LINC Context

We are fortunate that the blended pioneers in our LINC-BC Community of Practice have generously shared their stories with us. Those of you who are considering bringing blended programming to your organization can benefit from these best practices and lessons learned. This is what they have to say:

### Best Practices

### Key Questions

**1** **Keep pedagogy central** - the principles of effective instruction are as important in the online classroom as they are in the onsite classroom; your goal is to create multiple opportunities for **student learning**.

Are the online tasks and activities enhancing learning?

**2** **Use a team approach** - everyone needs to be on board, especially the administration; play to your strengths and find your experts; share, share, share!

What are the roles and responsibilities associated with a blended model (e.g., online course developer, Moodle manager, and online teacher) and who is the best fit for the role? How can we minimize duplication of effort?

**3** **Build IT competencies** - staff and students will get more out of the process if they are comfortable and confident using computers.

What is the current level of your teachers' IT competencies? How can you support their development? What is the most efficient way of getting students ready to participate online?

**4** **Build it into the program schedule** - blended learning is not an add-on or after thought; time spent online by teachers and students is class time; it is mandatory for students, and teachers are compensated for managing and monitoring it.

Can our existing program be modified to incorporate some blended classes? How can we incorporate blended classes in future proposals to the funder?

**5** **Integrate the online and physical classrooms** - tasks, projects, and learning outcomes should be threaded through the online and physical classrooms.

Can our existing program be modified to incorporate some blended classes? How can we incorporate blended classes in future proposals to the funder?

**6** **Increase student engagement** - students will be more engaged if they see that their online participation is meaningful and linked to their physical classroom; there are also strategies you can use to encourage students' online participation and collaboration.

Are students participating actively online? Why or why not? What can we do differently to engage them?

**7** **Plan for ongoing tech support** - there will be glitches; minimize these by having a maintenance plan and on-call support in place.

What is the best way to keep your computers, software and online classrooms in good working order? What happens if a teacher needs help in the middle of a demonstration in the onsite classroom, or a student needs help at home?

**8** **Discover what works best for you** - there is no right or best approach; you need to consider your organization's context, culture and capacity.

What do our students want and need? What will work in my organization and with my people?

# Resources

## The Definition of Blended Learning

This article offers a brief overview of blended learning.

<http://www.teachthought.com/blended-learning-2/the-definition-of-blended-learning/>

## Uses of Technology in the Instruction of Adult English Language Learners

This CAELA brief looks at the different ways technology can be used in the adult ESL classroom. It gives an overview of onsite, blended and online learning and provides some links for each application as well as issues that might arise for teachers while using technology for teaching.

<http://www.cal.org/caelanetwork/resources/usesoftechnology.html>

## ATESL Adult ESL Curriculum Framework - E-Learning Chapter

This chapter looks at the principles and best practices of e-learning in an ESL situation. It talks about the benefits and different approaches that could be taken. There are also some examples of how an ESL teacher might set up online tasks as well as effective e-learning assessment strategies.

<http://bit.ly/1t5bJcx>

## Flipping the Classroom for ELLs

This short article explains the idea of a “flipped classroom” and talks about why blended learning works well for English Language Learners. It also has some links to other sites with more information on the flipped classroom and blended learning.

<http://esltechies.com/tag/blended-learning/>

## Blended Learning Toolkit: Building Your Course

This resource offers a short run through of the general components of a blended learning course and how to go about building a course.

<http://bit.ly/1vpMvvi>



## Resources on Blended Learning

by Tina Chau, Decoda Literacy Solutions

Are you ready to add online learning to your on-site classes? Here's a sample of useful resources that offer you inspiration, information, and guidance—all available online or through the Decoda Literacy Library:

- *Cool Tech Tools for Lower Tech teachers: 20 Tactics for Every Classroom* by William N. Bender & Laura B. Waller (2013)
- *Empower English Language Learners with Tools from the Web* by Lori Langer de Ramirez (2011)
- *The Technology Toolbelt for Teaching* by Susan Manning & Kevin E. Johnson (2011)
- *Using Social Media in the Classroom: a Best Practice Guide* by Megan Poore (2013)
- *Using Technology with Classroom Instruction that Works 2nd ed.* by Howard Pitler, Elizabeth R. Hubbel & Matt Kuhn (2012)

The Decoda Literacy Library offers free library service throughout BC. Your loans are mailed to you with a prepaid return label. Use our website at [www.decoda.ca](http://www.decoda.ca) to search the online catalogue and request books, browse materials lists by topic, or learn more about borrowing. For help or ideas, contact us by email at [library@decoda.ca](mailto:library@decoda.ca) or give us a call at 604-681-4199.

**Decoda**  
LITERACY SOLUTIONS

# Resources

## Highlighted Resources

### Blended Learning: Creating Learning Opportunities for Language Learners

By Debra Marsh

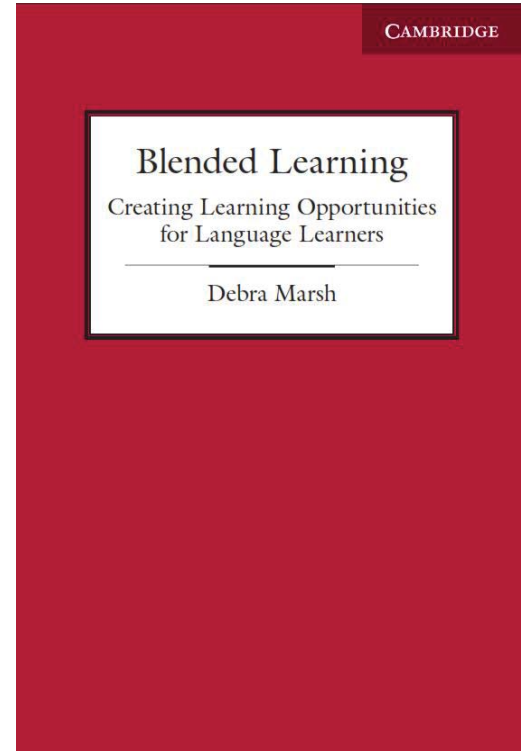
Book Review by Mary Wade, LISTN

This book provides a great introduction to and overview of blended learning in the context of language teaching. It looks at the inputs required from teachers and students and outlines the steps needed to make the blended learning experience a success for all involved. It acknowledges the fact that, as language teachers, we have all been using different “blends” for a while now, which may have included using video tapes, music, newspapers, worksheets from textbooks, or other media.

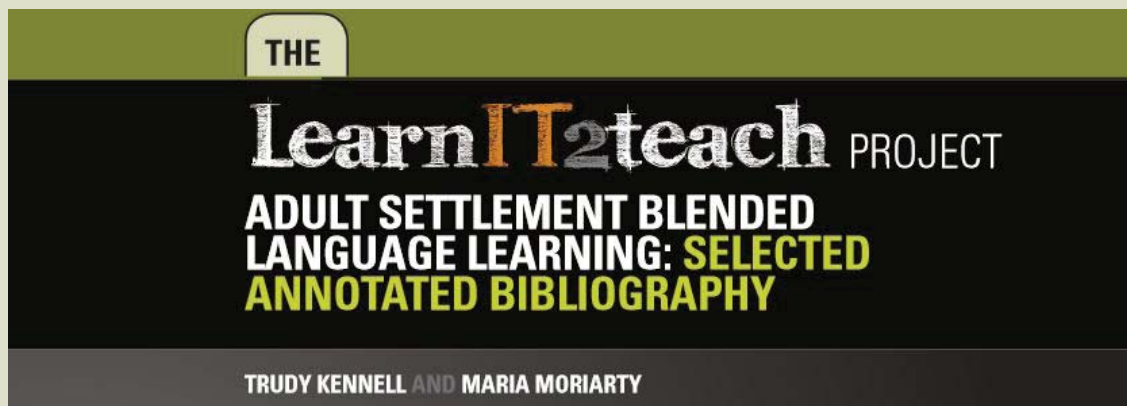
Now, we have the potential to use new technologies and the Internet to enhance our teaching and provide our students with even more learning opportunities. At the heart of Marsh’s book is the idea is that we need not get fixated on or intimidated by the technological aspects of blended learning. Instead we should use what makes sense to us in our individual situations.

The book can be accessed online at <http://bit.ly/1p1tXzk>

There is also a webinar: An Intro to Blended Learning with Debra Marsh at [http://youtu.be/INXXEAI\\_Plw](http://youtu.be/INXXEAI_Plw).



LearnIT2teach has recently published an annotated bibliography. It is divided into topics useful for the LINC program context, such as “Learner readiness and learner attitudes towards technology” and “Implementing blended learning language programs.” You can find the publication at <http://learnit2teach.ca/wpnew/new-publication-an-adult-settlement-blended-language-training-selected-annotated-bibliography/>.





# PD Opportunities

## BC TEAL



**BC TEAL LOWER MAINLAND REGIONAL CONFERENCE**  
**Celebrating Learner Success**  
*A day of professional development presented by BC TEAL*  
**Saturday November 22nd, 2014**

Join us for workshops, presentations, publishers' displays, networking opportunities, and a very special student-led plenary.

**Vancouver English Centre**  
250 Smithe Street  
Vancouver, BC, V6B 1E7

**Early Bird Deadline: November 1st, 2014**  
Early Bird Fees: \$30 (Discounted Members)/\$40 (Members)/ \$50 (Non-Members)  
Regular Fees: \$50 (Members)/ \$60 (Non-Members)  
Lunch is not included in the conference fee.



For registration details, please visit the BCTEAL website : <http://www.bctéal.org/conferences/2014-lm-regional-conference> or call 604-736-6330

### BC TEAL: Membership Has Its Benefits

by Michelle O'Doherty, BC TEAL Fraser Valley Regional Rep

Attention LINC Instructors! Have you considered a BC TEAL membership? As a LINC instructor, I have found my BC TEAL membership provides an excellent way to stay in the know about where TESL is headed in BC. I look forward to the annual conferences every year because the conferences always offer great opportunities for current, practical, professional development that I am able to apply directly to my teaching practices. The conferences have also provided a great way to network with others in the TESL field. There is even a LINC group on the BC TEAL website where LINC teachers can share ideas and network within their own geographic regions. A bonus for LINC instructors is that we receive discounted memberships and conference fees (choose the ELSA Net option when registering). For more information about the benefits of a BC TEAL membership, you can visit [www.bctéal.org](http://www.bctéal.org).

# PD Opportunities

## Professional Development on Tutela

### Upcoming Tutela Webinars

“Teaching in the Cloud: Integrating Cloud Technology for the LINC and ESL Classroom”

Sharon Deng

November 29, 2014, 8:00 - 9:00 am PST

Sharon Deng has been teaching LINC and ESL since 2006. She has taught everything from literacy to academic bridging. She is currently teaching part time in the CTESL program at Algonquin College and serves as Affiliate Representative for TESL Ottawa.

In this 60 minute presentation, participants will learn new and innovative ways of incorporating cloud technology into their LINC and ESL classrooms for all levels. A brief explanation of what cloud technology is will be followed by various examples of practical applications for Monday morning. The limitations of a classroom with few technological resources will also be emphasized to show how it is still possible to use technology to enhance your lessons for your learners.

Familiarity with smartphones would be helpful for viewer, but is not a requirement for this webinar.

RSVP for this webinar in Tutela’s events section under Community.

All Tutela webinars are recorded.

The recordings can be viewed

under the Professional Development section.



Are you interested in having a PD session on Tutela for your community?

Contact Diane Ramanathan at [diane@tutela.ca](mailto:diane@tutela.ca) for more information.

*Big Blue Button (BBB) on Tutela*



### Join the Teaching with Technology Group on Tutela!

Tech newbies and tech geeks, join our group to learn new tricks and to share your invaluable tips of using Web 2.0 tools and online resources for language teaching and learning. Let’s explore the WWW together. Let’s rock the language teaching!

To join, do the following:

1. Sign in at [www.tutela.ca](http://www.tutela.ca).
2. Click Groups.
3. Click Join Groups.
4. Type in search box, “Teaching with Technology.”
5. Click Join Group.

Check out some of the posts on the Forum for great ideas and resources shared by teachers and coordinators across Canada.

LISTN has a group on Tutela. Follow the same instructions above to join.





# PD Opportunities

# REALIZE!

THE NATIONAL  
ONLINE FORUM  
FOR EAL / ESL  
PROFESSIONALS

Save the date: January 23 & 24, 2015

A FREE ONLINE EAL/ESL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM

## REALIZE! 2015: The National Online Forum

Join us for the National Online Forum for English as an Additional Language (EAL)/English as a Second Language (ESL) Professionals in Canada on January 23 and 24, 2015. If you are involved in language training in Canada, you won't want to miss it. Building on last year's success, we will be bringing together EAL/ESL educators from across the country for a unique Professional Development experience.

Follow the link at <http://www.myenglishonline.ca/for-teachers/realize/> for more information.

## Blended Learning Webinars

### English Online TWT Webinars

English Online has a great collection of Teaching with Technology webinars on their website. You can participate in upcoming webinars or view one of the many recordings of their past webinars. PDFs of the presentations and handouts are also available for the recorded webinars. <http://www.myenglishonline.ca/for-teachers/twt-webinars/>



### ESL Literacy Workshop - Learning with Technology

ESL Literacy Network has a lot of general ESL workshops and webinars.

Here's one on technology. <http://www.esl-literacy.com/professional-development/1334>



# learn IT2teach

## LearnIT2Teach

Funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the LearnIT2teach Project provides a free, web-based blended learning system to LINC programs across Canada. Teachers are provided with CLB-referenced courseware and extensive training in support of blended learning. LearnIT2teach started operation in 2010 in CIC's Ontario Region, and it is now available to CIC-funded settlement language training programs in British Columbia. Follow this link [vganacheva@listn.info](mailto:vganacheva@listn.info) to contact Vania Ganacheva at LISTN for more information.

# From Our Members

## Online Learning at MOSAIC

by Nina Miller, Patricia Fahrni, Danuta Pawlak, Jason Green, Bahareh Shahabi and students, MOSAIC



### Administrator's Point of View

MOSAIC recognizes that communicating through technology is now an essential literacy skill. We started our English for Work blended program in 2011 with remarkable results in terms of student progress. Now every MOSAIC LINC class has an online classroom that is integrated and parallel with the onsite classroom.

The online classroom is no different from the physical classroom, in that it's all about language skill development. MOSAIC online development and delivery is guided by the same principles that guide its overall language teaching. A teacher with strong methodology makes a good online teacher—regardless of technical skills. Online teaching is not separate; authentic communication ties together onsite and online classrooms; learning activities cycle from school to the online classroom and back into school. Students have a chance to reflect on and develop their skills online, then test their learning in onsite classroom language production.

Rather than relying on outside experts, MOSAIC, under our Lead Online Developer, commissioned teams of our own teachers to collaboratively create and develop the online classroom structure and content. Because this approach comes out of teacher practice, the online classrooms are guaranteed to be relevant to clients and usable by teachers. Teacher-developers become peer leaders in using the online classroom and share their expertise and enthusiasm among staff.



### Some Facts about MOSAIC Online Classes:

- MOSAIC has over 75 active online classes and over 1300 active student users.
- MOSAIC has an online course for instructors to learn the basic skills necessary for online teaching.
- MOSAIC has an online teacher orientation course, for new teachers to MOSAIC.

In a recent survey of teachers and students participating in online classes, we learned the following things:

- 74% of the students agreed that the online classroom helped them review what they learned in class.
- 67% agreed that it improved their rate of learning.
- Students' perceptions of the benefits of Online Learning were generally consistent across all levels and all MOSAIC locations.
- 83% of the instructors said the opportunity for students to practice on their own time and at their own speed benefited their students' learning.
- When asked about what they liked the most about the online learning classroom, students gave particular reference to:
  - a) ability to practice anytime,
  - b) ability to review class material, and
  - c) easy access to additional learning materials and exercises.



# From Our Members

## Online Learning at MOSAIC

### Teacher Perspectives on Online Learning

“Students in the blended program tend to learn to take the classes more seriously and learn to be more professional. They also receive more feedback from their classmates and teacher, which increases the number of hours of interaction and exposure to English language material.”

“I found that the long-term advantages for my students far outweighed the early struggles we had, getting them access to their online class, having them participate in the forums, and giving constructive feedback to others. Students quickly learned to act professionally, follow the teacher’s announcements, and work with less supervision. The faster and more proficient students also tend to monitor and mentor the weaker ones.”

“Students are more open and willing to share information which helps me to understand their needs and goals and support their learning.”

“I can always tell who has been using the online classroom. Their performance across all skills is higher, and they are more confident producing language in the face-to-face classroom.”



### Student Perspectives on the Benefits of Online Learning

- “I can work at my own pace.”
- “I have more time to think about what I am going to write, and for reflection.”
- “It helps me to be an independent learner (more autonomy/ownership of the learning.)”
- “It helps me develop thinking skills. I need to solve my own problems and make my own decisions since the teacher cannot give me immediate answers.”
- “I like to listen to the video and audio again and again at home, so I can really understand.”
- “I can see all my peers’ work and the teacher’s feedback, and I can learn from it.”
- “I know that only my classmates and my teacher see my online class, so I feel comfortable sharing my ideas and writing, even if I make mistakes.”
- “I get to know my classmates better, by reading their forum posts.”
- “Writing online in forums and wikis increases my vocabulary and speaking fluency.”
- “When I give feedback to my peers I have to think about how constructive it is, so I develop critical thinking.”

# From Our Members

## How LearnIT2Teach Training Helped Me Become a Better Blended Learning Teacher

by Olga Kanapelka, ISSofBC

To be honest, I was a bit nervous when I found out that ISSofBC was going to implement blended learning in the LINC Program. There were two big challenges: learning the many new skills needed to become a blended learning instructor, and encouraging student participation.

Thanks to the training delivered by our talented team of online curriculum developers at ISSofBC, we learned how to facilitate student learning and edit the Moodle courseware. Despite this, I wanted to have greater control over and expertise with my online class. So I decided to take up LearnIT2teach training.

So far, I've learnt how to do many things with my online class:

- share my favourite links with students using Blocks;
- enhance communication with learners using Messages and Comment Blocks;
- give students the opportunity to improve their writing skills using blogs;
- publish frequently updated information, such as news and the weather using Feed Blocks;
- upload and share worksheets and materials used in class, which saves paper and helps absentees;
- create new activities to customize content according to the needs of my learners (you can make your own forum, wiki, glossary, NanoGong voice recording activity, and so on); and
- manage student participation through Course Report and send reminders to those who did not complete their tasks.

I've learned a lot in my brief time so far with LearnIT2teach. Check it out at

[www.learnit2teach.org](http://www.learnit2teach.org).

The growing number of tools available may be a little overwhelming at first. But becoming familiar with a few of them may be just enough to help you and your learners get started with blended learning.



## Blended Learning at ISSofBC: a Conversation with Janis Fair

Janis Fair, ISSofBC and Kathryn Rockwell, LISTN

What does your 'blended' program look like?

The blended program at ISSofBC blends classroom and online studying. Students in the blended classes have at least two face-to-face classes a week as well as three hours of weekly online activities. The students can complete the weekly online section at their own pace and at a location convenient to them. We currently offer blended classes to afternoon and evening students at CLB levels 4 to 8. Our research indicated that morning students preferred face-to-face classes.

We also have some 'optional blended classes,' which offer a weekly three-hour online section, and two fully online classes for students who cannot attend face-to-face LINC classes in the Sea to Sky corridor.

How is it set up in terms of online materials or lessons?

Each of our blended class teachers is provided with an online course. This course has weekly sections containing three hours of CLB aligned online activities. We have an online resource developer who develops and distributes the materials for the online courses. The teachers monitor the activities and provide support and feedback to the students. Teachers are also required to follow up and/or pre-teach at least some of the online activities each week so that the online component is linked to the classroom component of the blended class.

Can you expand on that?

Early on we observed that if the online activities were not related to what was happening in the classroom, many students didn't see them as important, mandatory, or worthwhile. However, if the teacher does even a small amount of follow up each week or pre-teaches the skills, the students are much more motivated to participate in the online section.

# From Our Members

## Why is ISSofBC using the blended class model?

I'll just give you our top two. First, it's a matter of convenience for our students. They're able to access the course on any computer with an internet connection anytime they wish. And many of the activities can be completed on mobile devices like smartphones and tablets. In addition, students develop the Essential Skills that are recognized as important in today's workplaces: digital literacy, clear communication, collaboration, time management, organization skills, and the like.

I should also point out that ISSofBC doesn't necessarily consider the blended program to be an opportunity to save money. Appropriate activities still need to be prepared for and the students need to be monitored, supported, encouraged, and responded to. There are also the additional costs associated with having a hosted Moodle site.



*Janis Fair, ISSofBC Online and Technology Coordinator  
and Kathryn Rockwell, LISTN*

## How do you identify the teachers you want to mentor for special positions related to teaching blended classes?

When choosing teachers for the blended classes, we choose those who have shown an interest in using technology in the classroom and are interested in trying and learning new things in terms of their teaching. The technological part of using the Moodle isn't complicated as long as the teacher is not afraid to try, so we don't expect teachers to come into the program with a high level of technological competence. We try to provide as much support as we can through training, screencasts, support forums, and email or phone support.

## How do you work with late adapters?

We knew that this was the direction our ELSA (now LINC) program was going to take, so we worked on preparing teachers for this change for a while by giving teachers chances to develop and use their online skills in various ways. I think it has become obvious to most of us that this is the direction that LINC will be moving in the future and most teachers understand that working in a blended program helps them develop skills that will keep them employable in the future. I think that students are not necessarily resistant to technology, but many lack basic computer skills or have trouble navigating the online instructions. We provide 'how-to' screencasts, a Help Desk, and a mandatory Student Training course, but this is definitely still an issue.

## Do you have any problems with student engagement?

We do have some students who indicate that they are too busy to go online, sometimes because they don't understand that the online activities are mandatory. When the online activities are followed up in the classroom and students see that their classmates have received meaningful and individualized feedback on their online work, these students often feel more motivated to try the online component. In many cases, students simply need encouragement to contribute or help understanding what is required of them. Sometimes there is a technical issue that we can try to help them resolve.

## How has your approach changed? Why?

We have definitely learned a lot and made a lot of changes over the last few years. I think the main thing has been recognizing the importance of teacher involvement so that the online component is well monitored and linked to the classroom, and that students are being given meaningful and timely feedback and support. Initially, we had separate classrooms and online teachers for the blended classes but that didn't work well. Later, the classroom teachers got more involved in tying the online component to the classroom and we saw student participation increase. Now our blended classes have one classroom/online teacher and we have found that to be a much better model.





# From Our Members

## 10 Tips to Get Learners Online

by Paul Carter, ISSofBC

1. Enhance your feedback by adding links to address common errors. Make a page of useful URLs—you can copy and paste from your list when correcting.
2. Log in daily. Whether you work online or not, this will keep you at the top of the Participants page, and active to the eyes of the learners.
3. Send a quick message to learners you see online. A simple, “Hello!” can help them feel included and increase motivation.
4. Use the blogs to pass on links and encourage learners to do the same, or to reflect on their learning in the blogs.
5. Create a treasure hunt to find information on the LMS—see who can find the information first.
6. Link the online material to the classroom and have learners come to class prepared to use what they have learned online. This will increase communicative time in class.
7. Reuse the learner-generated online content in class. Print out a class wiki to use in a class discussion, debate, or role-play.
8. Show learners how to view their own activity reports. Remind them that you can view them too.
9. In forum replies, direct learners to read and respond to another classmate’s post that echoes their own, or contradicts it.
10. Remind learners that glossaries, wikis, and forums are only as good as they make them. Stress to them that this is where they can collaborate and really help each other to learn more, together.



## Student Perspectives on Blended Learning

by Andrea Szakos, ISSofBC

I teach a blended CLB 7 class at ISSofBC. Blended learning has been an important part of my classes for some time now and I recently checked in with my students to hear their thoughts on this topic.

**Why did you choose blended learning?**

*Xiaohong: If you want to learn English you can't learn it all from your teacher. You need time to go over it by yourself to absorb the knowledge.*

**Which part of the Moodle is most challenging?**

*Farhad: Listening. I know all of the words, but I can't catch them. One of the benefits of Moodle is that you can listen again and again. And you're relaxed.*

*Sunny: To be honest, some of the videos are too long!*

**Which part is most enjoyable?**

*Jinnie: I spend a lot of time on phrasal verbs and idioms. I like that part. The quiz helps me to learn.*

*Xiaohong: The forums help me to know how other people think about the same problem. We are all from different cultures and we have different ideas about the same problem. Andrea's feedback tells us how Canadians think about the problem.*

**How is your teacher's support?**

*Golnaz: I think our teacher does a great job. She encourages me to use words or expressions that I'm not sure about. I use them because I know Andrea can correct them for me.*

**Any advice for other students?**

*Farhad: There are some very useful links and resources in the Moodle at the top of the page—links for expanding your English. It's updated each month.*



Discussing Moodle with students



# From Our Members

## Collaborating with Wikis in the Blended Classroom

by Nicole Moore, ISSofBC

A Wiki is a shared document for building content that multiple collaborators can add to, delete or modify. Unlike more complex Learning Management System (LMS) tools, wikis are fairly easy for teachers and learners to use.

### Ten Wiki Task Ideas for Blended Learning:

1. **Errors of the Month:** Add a list of sentences containing errors collected from student writing submissions.
2. **Cloze Activities/Dictations:** Ask students to contribute a number of words or phrases to a cloze on the Wiki.
3. **Grammar/Functional Language Exercises:** Instruct students to write 3 - 5 sentences each about their plans for the future, or rewrite a set of complaints so that they are softer. Students benefit from seeing the feedback provided for all of the learners in the wiki group.
4. **Categories:** Create a table for a category sorting activity for students to display their understanding of new vocabulary or language functions. For example, students could categorize a sampling of social gambits into the correct column based on the level of formality.
5. **Tip Sheets:** Collaborative tip sheets are a great way for students to share the work and avoid information overload.
6. **Scavenger Hunts:** Create a template or table for a language scavenger hunt. Assign a reading or listening and form teams where students work together to find the answers to questions or clues about the content.
7. **Surveys:** A monthly survey created and completed in a wiki is a great community connection activity.
8. **Group Projects:** Students work on projects in small groups or pairs and compile their results in a wiki. The planning stage of the project can be conducted in the classroom, online, or both.
9. **Planning an Event:** Assign various tasks to students and have them take responsibility for planning a class event, such as a field trip or end-of-term party.
10. **Format a Wiki:** As a follow-up activity to an assigned wiki, allow students to work together in class to correct and format a group project or tip sheet they have produced to make it more accurate and aesthetically appealing.

*Sample Wiki Page - Song Cloze*

### Wikis - Issues, Pitfalls and Potential Problems

1. **One at a Time:** Only one student at a time can work on a wiki. Use the duplicate tool to make multiple wikis, and label accordingly.
2. **Wiki Overload:** Lots of wikis look messy on your course page. Don't use wikis for activities that are more suited to other LMS tools.
3. **Wikis and Lower Levels:** Keep it simple and provide lots of structure. Use only one or two types of activities to increase student confidence.
4. **Don't Reinvent the Wheel.** Keep copies of tables and instructions in order to be able to reuse these activities.
5. **Curb the Keeners.** Invariably, you'll come across a student who completes all of the work in the wiki. Remind these students that this is an activity for all group members to contribute to.
6. **"Teacher, my work is gone!"**: Students will occasionally inadvertently delete their or their partner's work. This is easily rectified by restoring an earlier version of the wiki document.

#### Regrets....



#### Popular Songs about Regret:

No Regrets - Tom Cochrane (a Canadian singer)

Don't Think Twice (It's Alright) - Bob Dylan

(\*\*Bonus - find the terrible grammatical errors in this song made for the sake of rhyming)

I Did it My Way - Frank Sinatra original (\*\*It's hard to find, but there is a classic punk rock cover by the Sex Pistols and Ronnie version)

I Should Have Known Better - The Beatles (great grammar practice!!)

One of These Days - Neil Young (A song of regret about losing touch with friends)

*If you know of any other English songs about "regret" add your link to the list!*

Example regrets ... (where do I start? !😞)

- I wish I'd learned how to play an instrument. This is one of my biggest regrets in life. I took piano lessons for a couple of ye

# From Our Community

## Child Care

### Blending Age Groups in Childminding

by Heather Watson, CMAS

To meet the varying needs of newcomer families, programs often blend different age groups of children together. It can be challenging to create a safe environment that's stimulating for all ages and developmental levels, but children of all ages can benefit from spending time together. Here are some ideas about blending age groups in your childminding program

Tips for making it work:

- Maintain clear policies and procedures for supervision and behaviour guidance. Make sure everyone knows what's expected of them.
- Choose open-ended materials that are both interesting for all ages and safe for younger children. Avoid toys that may present choking hazards.
- Plan ahead for supervision and risk management with ratios that ensure the safety of the youngest children in the group.
- Cultivate a strong sense of community. Encourage older children to take on leadership roles and younger children to ask them for help.
- Support each individual child's learning and development and plan special challenges just for them.
- Establish appropriate expectations of younger children and offer extra support when they need it.

How mixed-age groups benefit children:

- Older children:
  - demonstrate greater empathy and nurturing
  - mentor and take on leadership roles with younger children
  - show increased levels of independence and competence
- Younger children:
  - respond well to their older peers
  - demonstrate better behavior, social skills, and problem solving
  - accomplish tasks they couldn't before without help from the older children

### Online Training and Resources:

Learn about a free 1-hour online course on caring for groups of mixed-age children at <http://bit.ly/1F3WCYr>.

Instructions to access a course are available on the CMAS website at <http://bit.ly/1qXcpjm>

Learn more about a 3-hour \$45 online certificate course in teaching Multi-Age groups at <http://bit.ly/1BNkbXh>

Learn about working with multiage groups through the CMAS Tipsheet at <http://cmascanada.ca/2011/09/01/working-with-multiage-groups-in-mobile-care/>

Learn about multiage grouping in Manitoba at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childcare/pubs/newsletter/newsletter2007may.pdf>

To learn more about this topic, consult the following references:

What does the research say about multi-age grouping for infants, toddlers and preschoolers?  
<http://bit.ly/1vpNdc1>

Some Benefits of Multi-Age Grouping  
<http://bit.ly/1tfkuji>



### Reach out for support:

CMAS consultants have been supporting programs like yours across Canada for 14 years. Visit the CMAS website at [www.cmascanada.ca](http://www.cmascanada.ca) and connect with your consultant at 1-877-677-6899, [helencrouch@cmascanada.ca](mailto:helencrouch@cmascanada.ca) or [naznindhanani@cmascanada.ca](mailto:naznindhanani@cmascanada.ca) for support.

# From Our Community



Language  
Education  
at a Distance

LINC Home Study  
Canada

## LINC Home Study: Delivering Language Education at a Distance

by Sonia Martin, Centre for Education & Training

Great news! Newcomers in BC now have the option to study English from home if they cannot attend onsite LINC classes. LINC Home Study combines self-study, either online or by correspondence, with weekly one-on-one instruction from a TESL-certified instructor via telephone or Skype.

### Eligibility

To be eligible to attend LINC Home Study, clients must meet the following criteria:

- Permanent resident or convention refugee
- School leaving age
- Unable to attend LINC classes in person
- Minimum CLBs L3, S3, R2, W2

### Referring Organizations in BC

To register, clients must have their English skills assessed using the Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessment (CLBA) or Canadian Language Benchmarks Placement Test (CLBPT), and have their eligibility for LINC Home Study determined. There are several referring organizations throughout BC available to assist. Follow this link for more information: <http://www.tcet.com/linc-home-study/assessment-centres-and-referring-organizations>.

If clients already have a LINC certificate from a language training provider within the last year, they may be eligible to attend LINC Home Study without visiting a referring organization. Please contact us for more information.

### Rack Cards and Posters

Help spread the word! Contact us if you are interested in receiving LINC Home Study promotional rack cards to share with your clients or posters to display at your office.

### Contact Information

Email: [lincndhelp@linchomestudy.ca](mailto:lincndhelp@linchomestudy.ca)  
Telephone: 1-800-668-1179 ext. 1294  
Website: [www.linchnational.ca](http://www.linchnational.ca)



## The Value of Engagement in The Westcoast Reader Online Community

by Tamara Lee, The Westcoast Reader

The WCR online community is unique. It's not only an online extension of our print edition but it's also an opportunity for a diverse readership to learn more about BC and Canada.

Our online demographic includes Canadian and international educators, as well as various levels of learners. Our challenge is to find ways to engage all members of our readership and to provide useful resources for all. As with any community, the WCR is dependent upon relationships in order to grow and remain relevant.

Social media is especially important for the integration of our readership, providing the opportunity to interact with readers through Facebook, Twitter, and our site comments section. Reactions, retweets, and comments help us clarify which articles are resonating, and provide ideas for future articles. This immediate feedback also helps indicate to our funders the breadth of our readers' engagement.

The future of the WCR online community depends upon the active participation of our readership. We welcome you to interact with us often, and encourage you to assist your students to do the same.

What our online community offers:

- contests, including the current Halloween photo contest and recent writing contest
- monthly polls based on a current issue
- evocative articles and audio texts
- events listings, and fun facts and stories
- community involvement and surveys

We're currently running a survey to help us determine future content and direction for the WCR online community. Please take a few moments to add your feedback by following the link at

<http://www.thewestcoastreader.com/>. Once again, thank you for reading and using the WCR in your class!



# Announcements

## New Delta Facility for LINC

*Delta Community College, Delta School District*

After many years of operation, the Delview Adult Learning Centre closed this past summer. The programs it housed were moved to a new location at the brand new Delta Community College. LINC students returned in September to big bright classrooms, with new equipment in each room, and a student lounge to take breaks in.

Teachers are delighted with new furniture, a new computer lab, and a lovely modern facility. We are learning how to use the new projectors, and welcome suggestions. It is good to be able to demonstrate the use of websites for learning, and to show video clips for discussion.

Adult education has been offered in Delta since 1977, and this is the first time there has been a new building to house the programs. In addition to LINC courses, Foundation English and Math is available—along with high school completion courses and computer training.

The college is located at 11590 83rd Avenue, Delta, just a few blocks from the former Delview Adult Learning Centre.



[www.listn.info](http://www.listn.info)



We have a new website with all of the same resources and information as the ELSA Net website.

What's on the LISTN website?

- ✓ Find LINC schools
- ✓ Job postings
- ✓ Resources

### LISTN Training

Workshops, webinars, and e-learning courses

### For Teachers

Highlights section - latest and popular resources

LISTN resources - CLB-aligned resources for LINC classrooms

Assessment Resources - Formative Assessment Toolkit and Learner Self-Assessment Toolkit

### For Students

Links for self-study



*Please bookmark [www.listn.info](http://www.listn.info) or type it in the address bar as we are not coming up on Google search results yet. You can also follow us on Twitter @LISTNCanada*