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Content Submissions for
Fall 2004: Contact
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Be sure to check out
www.elsanet.org

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GREETINGS FROM THE ELSA NET TERM COORDINATOR

Wow! Twelve weeks and two Executive meetings, four Regional meetings, one PD event, three STaRS meetings, one PMFAC meeting, two site visits, several Literacy Project meetings, a few external sectoral and government initiated meetings, one service extension proposal, and one newsletter later, I can only say that my steep learning curve is far from over! My job would not have been made possible was it not for Brenda's meticulous orientation, the unfailing support and patience of the Executive Officers and the Board, Salima's attention to detail and calm juggling of several deadline-driven projects, and the input and assistance received from you all. Thank you for your participation and kind words of encouragement. Salima, I will miss you a lot, but am happy for you and the new opportunities ahead of you in your role of the Council Coordinator for the BC Council for International Cooperation.

I am very excited about what lies ahead of us, in spite of all the uncertainty, changes and challenges the months ahead may bring. I am looking forward to all of our collaborative efforts and meeting many more of you in person!
Nina Karamehmedovic
ELSA Net Term Coordinator

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Happy spring! We are back into the season of stress, anxiety and contract proposals. I hope you all weather it well. There are lots of changes in 2004 in ELSA Net Society. We received our certificate of incorporation March 19, 2003. For the first time, we manage the finances ourselves! This has been a big change with Nita Jacob as our Treasurer doing great ground-breaking work. Then, Nina Karamehmedovic took over Brenda's position during her maternity leave and she is doing a terrific job

under quite difficult circumstances. Thank you very much Nina. And now Salima Jethani is leaving!

The contract extension is proving to be a new challenge, but we are ready for it. The committees have been reactivated - STaRS and PMFAC and are doing valuable work. Our new project, the *Adult ESL Literacy Survival Guide for Instructors* will be out soon and will be a welcome and valuable help to all teachers with literacy students in their ELSA classes. Another output from ELSA Net and its members. Keep up the good work everyone.

Loree Phillet,, ELSA Net President

MESSAGE FROM 'MOTHERHOOD CENTRAL'

Coming to you from motherhood central - just to let you know that Luka and I are doing great and establishing something of a schedule. He loves his daily walks outside, so we are spending a lot of time exploring our south Burnaby neighborhood. He is now at the smiling stage and it is a pleasure to see his face light up when he looks at his mom and dad.

I am happy to see that things are going well at ELSA Net with Nina at the helm. I can enjoy my break, keep up with all the latest news, and still feel on top of everything! Thanks to all for helping her with the learning curve...

I have dropped in on a few committee meetings and may show up when you least expect it! All the best and enjoy a wonderful B.C. spring. I also want to wish Salima the best of luck!

Brenda Lohrenz



NSC II – FOLLOW UP...

Moving Ahead – Joint Planning Committee (JPC) and Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI) – Settlement Sector.

Following the highly successful National Settlement Conference II held in Calgary, Alberta last October, the Joint Planning Committee and VSI Co-chairs reconvened in a face to face meeting in late January to address several issues related to the outcomes of the conference and VSI working group initiatives as well as to explore a mechanism to continue the dialogue between the sector and government in order to enhance the sector's ability to engage in program/policy development on a national basis.

NSC II conference proceedings should be available to delegates sometime in April 2004 along with revised discussion papers from the four VSI working groups. The Joint Planning Committee (JPC) formed to guide the two National Settlement Conferences and the VSI has been disbanded. CIC NHQ and the Settlement Sector acknowledged the need for a national committee/mechanism to continue to dialogue and engage in public policy, etc. For the time being the JPC with its current membership remaining intact has been transformed into a Settlement & Integration Joint Policy/Program Council/Committee – (SI-JPPC). The name of the committee and the terms of reference will be finalized by March 31, 2004. The purpose of this committee among many possible functions is to develop an action plan arising from the recommendations out of NSC II and support and guide the continuing work of the existing national working groups e.g. small centre strategy - tool box project.

In addition, the Settlement sector representatives on this committee reached consensus on the need to research the feasibility and various options for an on-going national consultative framework for the immigrant-serving sector in Canada. CIC NHQ has agreed to provide a financial contribution to this initiative. We hope to launch this project in late March 2004 and be able to circulate a discussion paper throughout the sector sometime in the fall of 2004.

Please feel free to contact me at 604 684-7498 or via e-mail cfriesen@issbc.org if you have any question

Chris Friesen, AMSSA's representative to SI-JPPC

SETTLEMENT AND MULTICULTURALISM BRANCH UPDATES...

Update on the Implementation of an Open Solicitation Process for BCSAP Funding

The Settlement and Multiculturalism (SaM) Branch is continuing to move towards implementing an open solicitation and enhanced contract management model for the BC Settlement and Adaptation Program. The goal of this change is to bring the branch's contract management regime more in line with the Provincial Government's commitment to open, fair and transparent contracting, and to introduce a timeframe that is more closely linked to the government's fiscal year than in the past.

Under the new system, funding for BCSAP Streams 1, 2, 3 (ELSA), and 1/3, will be awarded through an open solicitation process this spring. Request for Proposals (RFPs) for BCSAP funding will be posted on the BC Bid Web site (www.bcbid.gov.bc.ca) between May 15 and June 30, 2004. Prospective applicants who register on BC Bid in advance will receive automatic email notification when the RFPs are posted. To register, see the instructions below.

To assist agencies to participate in the open solicitation process, SAM Branch is planning to sponsor workshops on how to respond to an RFP in five regions in April. Further information about these workshops will be posted on the SAM Branch Web site in mid-March.

www.mcaaws.gov.bc.ca/amip/sam.

Alison Dudley, Stakeholder Relations Manager, SAM Branch, MCAWS

How to Register on BC Bid

1. Log-on to Web site: <http://www.bcbid.gov.bc.ca>
2. Click on registration at the top right corner
3. Accept agreement
4. Fill out self registration
5. Click on e-notification
6. Enter additional information for e-notification and submit
7. Set up profile by clicking Go button under "Product Information"
8. Under "Supplier Registration" click on Services
9. Click on and check off the appropriate product profiles and sub-profiles e.g. *Adult Education, ESL, Literacy, Social Services, - Immigrant Support Services*
10. Click on Submit and then close the window
11. When you are returned to "Profile Setup" click Finish to complete the registration process
12. You are now registered on BC Bid and will receive e-mail notification each time a new bid that matches your profile is posted

SETTLEMENT AND MULTICULTURALISM BRANCH UPDATES... (con't)

Upcoming Settlement and Multiculturalism (SAM) Branch Initiatives:

For as long as I have worked with the English language sector, it has been recognized that immigrants destined to the labour market need more English training than LINC or ELSA provided. Additional language will help clients to access further language or employment training or to be more prepared to identify their employment plans.

As the lead staff person for managing the labour market initiatives for the Settlement and Multiculturalism Branch (SAM), it is very exciting to be moving towards piloting a number of initiatives aimed at responding to these concerns.

The key initiatives presently funded include:

1. A review of services available in BC which offer a combination of English language and labour market content. A few of the key factors we hope to compile include: who funds these services; the content and intent of the services; what fees are associated; what the intended result for the client is.
2. The establishment of Enhanced ELSA level 4 and 5 pilot classes with a combination of settlement English and labour market content. A total of 12 level 4 and 12 level 5 classes will be provided throughout BC. Classes at each level will run for 12 weeks. Classes will be offered in Nanaimo, Kamloops, Prince George, Abbotsford, Coquitlam, Richmond, Surrey and Burnaby.
3. The development of an Enhanced ELSA level 4 and 5 curriculum and associated exit tests by Vancouver Community College. VCC will also lead the advisory body which will be comprised of all pilot sites and will provide support for instructors in these sites.

Future expansion or continuation of these or new initiatives will rest on securing additional funding, prioritizing proposed initiatives, review of the pilot results and Ministry direction.

The Settlement and Multiculturalism Branch and ELSA Net will keep the ELSA sector informed of pilot progression primarily through regional meetings and sector and Branch communications.

Norah Cameron, Program Design & Evaluation Analyst, SAM Branch, MCAWS

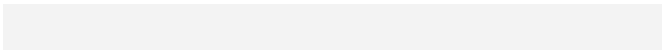
ESL Services Review

In July 2003 the Ministry of Advanced Education and the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services announced their intention to review the wide range of publicly funded ESL and ancillary services delivered on behalf of the Government of British Columbia. An Advisory Group to assist with this review was named. Of the seven members named to the Advisory Group, three are responsible for the delivery of ELSA programming; Loree Phillet (Burnaby College), Nita Jacob (Coquitlam Continuing Education) and Liz Bloomfield (Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria).

Both ministries, with assistance from the Advisory Group, selected Zena Simces and Associates to review and report on existing programming, highlighting issues impacting funders, providers and clients and to analyze models of ESL delivery in other parts of the country. As part of the work in preparation for writing the report, Zena, and her associate in this project, Reena Taviss, held a number of focus groups around the province throughout the fall. Many ELSA Net members were invited to participate in those focus groups. Focus groups were also held with ELSA learners. Zena and Reena submitted their report to the Advisory Group in February. The report is now being shared with ministries for them to review and offer comments.

Once a thorough analysis of the report and other information sources is complete, the review will move to a second phase, the preparation of a strategic plan and a revised, as appropriate, ESL delivery model for the province.

**Rob Boldt,
Performance and Management
Manager,
SAM Branch, MCAWS**



SETTLEMENT AND MULTICULTURALISM BRANCH UPDATES... (con't)

Client Satisfaction and Outcomes Survey

In order to measure the impact of services on clients and to set baselines and future performance targets, the Settlement and Multiculturalism Branch is currently implementing a province-wide client satisfaction and outcome survey. Service agencies have indicated the need for this kind of common survey method to identify service outcomes at a program level. The survey will also be used to confirm the validity of the immediate to medium term outcomes identified in the performance measurement frameworks. This will be the first time BC SAP clients have been surveyed at such a broad level and will provide the Branch and agencies with critical information on how well programs are meeting needs.

The Branch has worked with advisory groups from each funding stream – including ELSA- and a professional research firm, Synovate, to determine the most appropriate way to implement the client survey. For Stream 3 clients, a multilingual telephone survey has been developed that can be administered in eight languages (English, Chinese, Punjabi, Korean, Spanish, Farsi, Vietnamese, and French). To qualify for this survey, clients must have been in ELSA classes for at least three months and have exited the program since March 2003. It is estimated that in excess of 4,500 students will meet this qualification. To survey these clients, students will be telephoned from listings –taken from STaRS- supplied to Synovate which indicate their native language. The survey questionnaire will contain a total of about 25 questions, including 2 open-ended questions to allow respondents to expand or clarify their responses to closed-ended or rating type questions. The survey will be conducted between March and April 2004. The Branch intends to share the survey results with service providers to engage the sector in a discussion about the impact and the quality of ELSA as reflected by the service recipients.

Patricio Ibarra, Program Design & Evaluation Analyst, SAM Branch, MCAWS

ENHANCED ELSA 4/5 Pilot Project – Curriculum & Test Development

The Settlement and Multiculturalism Branch has contracted with 8 pilot sites (for classes) and Vancouver Community College (for curriculum and test development and pilot instructor support) to deliver Enhanced ELSA 4 and ELSA 5 with a labour market focus. The VCC team has been hard at work in February preparing drafts for language outcomes, themes and topics, and computer skills outcomes, and gathering resources to be reviewed by the pilot project instructors in a 2-day meeting, March 3 and 4.

Drawing on the experience and expertise gained in developing the ELSA 3 curriculum and ELSA 3 Exit tests, as well as on a wealth of information and resources around Essential Workplace Skills, the VCC team is confident that they can produce quality products on time and on budget. They are really looking forward to a collegial, cooperative relationship with the pilot instructors so that the end products are ones that everyone is happy with and can use in both Lower Mainland and regional centres. ELSA 4 and 5 will focus on Canadian Language Benchmarks 4 – 6 and on generic workplace communication skills and socio-cultural competencies as well as job search and access to further education and training. It will not be occupation specific. It is interesting to note that CIC (Immigration Canada) has a call for proposals for a Benchmark 7-10 curriculum with a labour market focus as part of the Enhanced Funding for settlement language training.

Alison Norman, VCC

STaRS:

The Working Group on Stars (WGOS) has been reconvened and is presently working on prioritizing enhancements and fixes to the database and assessing current needs of Users. The group is made up of a mix of frontline staff that use STaRS on a day to day basis and school administrators. The WGOS is currently conducting an electronic survey of all users to assess needs, usage and issues with the database. Users are encouraged to use the survey to communicate any problems, concerns, and recommendations about STaRS. Users can follow the work of the group by reading the meeting minutes to be posted on www.elsanet.org. STaRS users are encouraged to contact Nina Karamehmedovic at ELSANet or Patricio Ibarra at the Ministry to enquire more about the work of the WGOS.

In an effort to improve communication, STaRS LTOs are encouraged to register a second contact -within their LTOs- into the STaRS Users e-mail distribution list. A maximum of two will be allowed with certain exceptions. Users are reminded that the formal method of communication about STaRS between the Ministry and Users is the electronic Bulletins. So far Bulletins # 1 -#5 have been released. Users should refer to them. If you are missing any bulletins, contact Patricio.

Terms of Reference for the WGO's:

1. Advise the Ministry on issues related to the STaRS database computer system.
2. Assist the Ministry to identify training needs and tools for Language Training Organization (LTO) staff.
3. Assist the Ministry to identify enhancements to STaRS.
4. Advise the Ministry on a strategy to effectively disseminate information on database features.
5. Assist the Ministry in maintaining the Policy and Procedures Protocol

Patricio Ibarra, Program Design & Evaluation Analyst, SAM Branch, MCAWS

ELSA Net News...

Coming Soon: “Adult ESL Literacy Survival Guide for Instructors”

The spring ushers in new arrivals of many kinds, and by April ELSA Net will have a new publication to offer ESL literacy instructors across the province. This publication is an attempt to address the needs of ELSA instructors who have been receiving increasing numbers of literacy students in their classrooms. ESL instructors in community-based classrooms are well acquainted with teaching in a multi-level setting. However, there are particular challenges associated with having students who are at the low end of the literacy continuum alongside those who can already read and write at a beginner level.

It is these challenges that the upcoming “*Adult ESL Literacy Survival Guide for Instructors*” attempts to address. With funding from the Settlement and Multiculturalism Branch of the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women’s Services, the project started in the fall of 2003 when Brenda Lohrenz approached me to compile a comprehensive list of ESL literacy resources as well as online literacy resources currently available. Because of the substantial number of resources already available, the focus of the publication is not to be another classroom resource. It is intended rather, as a tool for ESL-literacy instructors to let them know what materials are currently available, help them to access these materials, and to offer some guidance as to how to handle some common challenges they face.

Enter Janet Massaro, with her many years of practical experience in teaching and designing materials for use with literacy students in her ELSA classes at Immigrant Services Society (ISS) in Vancouver. Janet and I, together with a very dedicated focus group of ELSA-literacy instructors from around the Lower Mainland, were able to come up with a format for this publication. Janet and I prepared a survey to identify common challenges ELSA instructors face with regard to literacy learners in their classrooms. This survey was distributed to ELSA providers across the province. The responses to these surveys along with the input from the focus group enabled us to come up with a list of commonly faced “challenges”.

We decided as a group at this point what form the guide would take - It would be a guidebook for any instructor new to ESL-literacy instruction which would offer strategies for dealing with the challenges they face daily, along with a sample lesson progression for each of the challenges addressed. In addition there would be a comprehensive list of available resources both print and online and how to access these resources.

Janet has been toiling relentlessly over the past few months, and the end product will be a compilation of (and practical response to) 12 common challenges in a question format: “How do I ...?”. I, too, have been cloistered in front of my computer compiling an annotated list of resources, publisher contact information, and ferreting out decent online sources of information specific to ESL literacy.

In the midst of this whirlwind, Brenda stepped out to have baby Luka, and in came Nina Karamehmedovic to lend a capable hand in seeing the project through to the final product. Janet also enlisted the support of 3 regions outside of the Lower Mainland to review material. The resulting input provided by instructors from Victoria, Prince George and Kelowna has been invaluable. With the finishing touches applied by graphic artist Roberta Ridd of Topshelf Creative, we are looking forward to the grand unveiling of what we hope will be a very practical and useful guide.

Sheila Buchanan, Project Researcher, Adult ESL Literacy Guide for Instructors.

To Announce: 36th Annual B.C. TEAL Conference: “Answering the Why and the How in English Language Teaching”

An exploration of motivation, from the theoretical to the practical. Why do students study English? Why do ESL practitioners choose their field? How do you keep yourself, as an instructor, motivated? How do you motivate your students? Why is it important to understand your students' motivation? How do you maximize the learning opportunities for your students? How do you break through the cultural differences of your students to build a sense of community within your classroom, and within your organization? Why is the work you do important from a global, social, and personal perspective? Join us and share your experience, your stories, your ideas, your thoughts and those of your peers.

Saturday, May 8, 2004
Douglas College, New Westminster
Plenary Speaker: Laraine Kaminsky, Ottawa, ON
For more information visit the BC Teal website at www.BCTEAL.org

**Community Kitchens-
more than “good meals”**

According to the statistics published by the Dietitians of Canada 2003 “*Cost of Eating Report*”, the monthly cost to feed the reference family of four (two parents, two children) was \$648.00 compared to \$629.00 in 2002. A 9% increase.

For many of our low-income students living on a fixed income is a struggle. That 9% increase will make an impact on their food purchases. Saving and cost cutting is a reality for many of the students: the last thing on their minds is whether they are getting all their food groups? Or whether that extra \$0.39 that they pay for 100% whole wheat bread is worth it?

One of the alternatives to cost cutting is joining a community kitchen group. For the last 6 months, Surrey Delta Immigrant Services Society has run the “*Communities Together Cooking Program*” funded by the United Way. This program is specifically for low-income immigrants and refugees. Twice a month, a group of 8 people gather together and cook healthy meals. Once the meals are prepared, they are distributed equally amongst the group. Groups are lead by trained volunteer kitchen leaders and meet at different locations in Surrey. Volunteer training includes; Food Safe Certificate, SDISS orientation, and nutritional tips from local community nutritionist. Our volunteers speak a variety of languages and some are graduates of the ELSA program.

This program has wonderful opportunities for our volunteers and participants. Both the volunteers and participants are involved in the meal planning and scheduling of cooking times. When menu planning, the volunteers try to keep in mind the nutritional aspects of the food preparation. The Surrey Food Bank also provides dry foods that which is included in our budget planning

Over the past few months, there has been an increase in awareness in budgeting skills, selecting healthier recipes, and a feeling of accomplishment in both the volunteers and participants. Our groups are culturally diverse and have been challenged at times to accommodate their differences. Overall, it has been a very positive experience for all and has provided an opportunity to expand the group’s understanding of tolerance and adaptation. Although a Community Kitchen does not solve poverty issues for our students, it is a resource that can be used. It also opens up other opportunities in community development. The next step is for this group to be involved in a community garden project and share their resources with others. For further information please call (604) 597-0205 Ext. 325.

Yvette Ortiz, Coordinator Communities Together Cooking Program, SDISS

The Jigsaw Method

It’s 1971. Imagine yourself a young ESL student, in a desegregated Texas classroom with native speaking classmates from middle class backgrounds. On a good day, those students ignore you; on a bad day, they mock your accent. Professor Eliot Aronson was called in to address this situation. He concluded that hostility was due to the competitive traditional classroom environment. Cooperative learning, through the jigsaw method, was the solution.

The jigsaw method is simple. Text is divided into parts. Students work together in homogeneous “expert groups”, helping each other to memorize or paraphrase one part. In the next stage, students are put into heterogeneous groups to teach their part to students who have learned other parts. The third stage involves group activities based on the complete text they have just learned together.

When these Texas students tried their first jigsaw, Aronson observed the usual frustrations at having to pay attention to students with strong accents or weaker skills. But since the students’ success depended on working together, a notable change was observed. Top students developed strategies to understand lower students’ accents. They encouraged them to take their time, showed interest and even praised them, so they wouldn’t become flustered. Not only did the overall atmosphere change but interracial friendships emerged and lower students developed more self-confidence. Students expressed less prejudice and stereotyping. They reported liking school more and were absent less. Poorer students scored significantly higher on exams than students in traditional classes.

The jigsaw method can be used in a variety of learning contexts. Over the past twelve years, I’ve watched it transform the ELSA classroom. I published two jigsaw books (www.esljigsaws.com) and now have two more in the testing stage. I’d like to show you the first jigsaw for a higher level task oriented student who prefers to work alone: You’d see him call me over to explain that he cannot possibly answer some of the questions, since the information was not in his part. You’d see me reiterating that groups need to work together to answer the questions about the story; and, in subsequent classes, you’d see that same student working cooperatively with all members of his group. Unlike ESL classroom talk, jigsaw talk is a real communication situation, with a purpose and a genuine need to convey meaning. You’d see students employing a lot of useful strategies to understand; repetition and clarification of words. You’d see less confident students bloom when higher students consult them. And finally, you’d see a classroom where every student is involved, using reading, and speaking, listening and writing skills. This method is ideally suited to create a positive environment in the classroom.

Nancy Callan

ELSA Level 3 Exit Tests-Helpful Hints by Alison Norman, VCC

Q: Do we have to give the ELSA Level 3 exit tests to all ELSA graduates?

A: No, if a learner has completed his/her hours of entitlement and is still in a Level 1 or 2 class, or functioning at Level 1 or 2 in a multilevel class, you do not have to give the exit tests. Indeed, such a learner would be overwhelmed by them and it would be a negative experience for all. Very occasionally a learner refuses to take the tests. You can't force them, but you can tell them that you will note on their record that they refused. No, the Ministry has not required ELSA providers to use the tests. However there are some good reasons to use them:

- a) Learners all enter ELSA with entry Canadian Language Benchmarks. Using the tests to accurately determine exit Benchmarks gives the learners feedback on their progress which they appreciate and value.
- b) More and more BC colleges and training providers are getting on board with Canadian Language Benchmarks. In some cases, ELSA graduates can use their exit Benchmarks to access further ESL and skills training.
- c) Designing other tests or assessment instruments to determine exit Benchmarks is time consuming, costly and requires considerable expertise. The Ministry (Norah Cameron) has said that it expects alternatives in place if an ELSA provider opts not to use the VCC-developed Level 3 Exit tests, and has mentioned that the alternatives will have to be aligned to Benchmarks or the VCC test using a formal process.
- d) Using tests of all four skills, based on Benchmarks and the mandated objectives of the ELSA program, encourages instructors to provide a balanced, relevant course of study to ELSA learners.

Q: I have only 1 or 2 learners graduating from Level 3 at a time. How do I test and teach my class at the same time?

A: This is a common situation. Here are some possible solutions:

- a) For Listening/Reading/Writing tests, the graduating students can be put in another room, area, or office and supervised by a volunteer, secretarial staff person, receptionist, etc. The latter just need to keep an eye on the time (purchase a kitchen timer to help them) and glance at the students occasionally. If there is no one to help, the students can be seated in the back of the room with headsets on so they are not disturbed by class noise.
- b) For Speaking, the rest of the class can do a reading or writing exercise, play a language board or card game, watch a video or film, etc. while you take the pair out of the room for 20 minutes to do the speaking test.
- c) For any of the tests, you can send the rest of the class out on a contact assignment, information scavenger hunt, mystery tour, etc. while you do the testing with your graduates.
- d) For any of the tests, if you have more than one ELSA or ESL class in your location, you can team-teach. One instructor takes all the students to be tested; the other instructor does interactive activities (role-plays, interviews, information gaps, find someone who...) with the others. Even classes at different levels can benefit from interaction with each other. Stronger students can help weaker or take the more challenging roles.

Q: I am the only ELSA teacher at my provider. How can I do the speaking test by myself?

A: You must use a tape recorder if you are alone. You facilitate the test and do the holistic scoring. Later you listen to the tape to do the analytical scoring.

Q: The speaking test is supposed to take 20 minutes for each pair of students. I seem to be taking 25-30 minutes. What am I doing wrong?

A: You are not doing anything wrong but you can tighten up on the time. Here are some suggestions how:

- a) Have a clock with an easy-to-read face on the table facing you. If learners carry on too long, politely but firmly cut them off (e.g. "This is a very interesting discussion and I see you have strong opinions. Perhaps you would like to continue talking later, but right now I have heard enough. Thank you.")
- b) If, in the problem solving Task 3 or discussion Task 4, the students just keep repeating 1 or 2 points and clearly don't have anything else to say, you can politely stop the interchange.
- c) In Part 1 Introductions and Guided Interviews, I cheat a bit and make ONE follow-up question that elicits a personal narrative; e.g. "So Salima, John said that you are married. Can you tell me about your husband and how you first met him?" "Su Ling, you were an engineer in China. Can you tell me about your job and how you found that job?"

NB Your aim in the speaking test is to get a reasonable sample of learner speech, not to give learners maximum time to practice speaking English.

Q: There are tests of all four skills. Should I administer them all in one day?

A: NO, please don't exhaust and overwhelm your learners or yourself! Spread the testing out over several days or a couple of weeks. Leave yourself time for marking before the learner's last day in class.

129 hours in ELSA: An ELSA Story

My name is Amber Lu. I come from Taiwan. On December 1, 2003, I entered the ELSA Program at Windsor Education Academy (WEA) in Richmond where my kid was studying ESL during last summer vacation.

When I started studying ELSA Program, my Benchmarks was 3-3-6-6, and all my friends who I met in church or Community Centre persuaded me not taking any more ESL Program. "It is useless, you will forget all of them," they said. But I decide to give a try. My teacher in Windsor is so nice and patient. She uses lots of drawings and sometimes even use body language to explains each word thoroughly. I understand the cultural differences between the western and eastern, for example, Canadian use "bargain" while Asian ask for "discount" instead. In this way, I will never forget the meaning of these words again.

After 129 hours studying ELSA program in Windsor, I start to realize that learning language is not only the vocabularies and grammar, but also the culture, the knowledge and the sentiment. I will graduate in the end of May. I am looking forwarding to upgrading high level such as ELSA 4 or 5 in order to get into the society sooner.

Thanks to the staff at Windsor, especially my teacher, Yvonne. Thank you for giving me strength, encouragement and confidence.



Amber Lu, and Program Coordinator, Rena Liang

HONOURING DIVERSITY

We had a visitor the other day in our ELSA program. A counsellor with the Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society, he came to share with us his birthday. He came carrying a drum. Our students had gathered for our morning break. We all stood as he honoured us with a prayer song, for which he asked us to remember people who were close to us, but perhaps far away. He then asked the women to remain standing, and allowed the men to sit, while he sang a song honouring the women in our lives.

This wasn't the first time the Kelowna ELSA program, and the aboriginal and community-serving Friendship Society had shared. The counsellor had visited us previously to share aboriginal culture. Some of our Chinese-culture students had helped with decorations for a Chinese-New-Year-themed Family Night, which the Friendship Society hosted in February. In January, our students helped put on an Elders' luncheon, showcasing their own cultures and food. Last year, our students took part in cultural evenings, attended a pow-wow, and danced the friendship dance. One student made both aboriginal friends and beaded dream catcher earrings for her mother-in-law at the society's women's circle.

The Kelowna ELSA program being a program administered by the Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society (KFS) may be a rather unique situation, but through the sharing with KFS' staff and clients, it may also be that our ELSA clients and staff have opportunities to see beyond the stereotypes and media portrayals of aboriginal people.

To locate a friendship society near you, visit the British Columbia Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres website at www.bcaafc.com

Marion McCarthy, Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society

Publication Announcement:

S.U.C.C.E.S.S. is proud to announce the publication of the 7th edition of *Becoming a Citizen*, and for the first time it is now available in English-Korean as well as in English-Chinese. This latest edition of *Becoming a Citizen* has also gone through a complete re-write. It has all the questions about the history, geography, and government of Canada that are in *A Look at Canada* and a lot more (but we provide all the answers too – bilingually). *Becoming a Citizen* costs \$15 (plus GST and shipping) and is available from most S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Social Service Centres. You can also place your order with a purchase order number (or cheque) by contacting: settlement@success.bc.ca We also provide:

- Citizenship preparation classes (bilingual – English with Cantonese, Mandarin or Korean)
- Private or semi-private citizenship tutorials
- Citizenship form filling
- Citizenship hearing interpretation

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

NEW DIRECTIONS FASHION SHOW

On November 19th 2003, present, as well as former students of New Directions, and a group of not so recent Ukrainian and Scottish immigrants, took part in a successful showing of ethnic clothing. The show was presented at the monthly general meeting of the Langley Arts Council and held at the Langley Community Music School. The Scottish contingent included senior citizens as well as many young children and was greatly appreciated by the audience who to a great part consisted of both current and former students. Both the Korean and Hungarian participants brought young children who seemingly enjoyed themselves on the stage.

I have lived in many countries and on occasion used to wear their ethnic dress. They now are part of my collection even though I no longer fit into them. Luckily for me both current and former students agreed to model them. Still, to set a good example, I wore a dress from a European country myself. An even greater success was the fact that the program director from Korean TV came with her photographer to video our presentation. The show was shown twice on the multicultural channel. This was our second fashion show and will be an annual event.



Inta Schort, New Directions

New Resources

Two series of texts from two different countries would make excellent additions to any teachers' prep room. From Oxford University Press comes the Oxford Basics series for beginning students and beginning teachers. The series has titles such as Simple Reading Activities, Presenting New Language, Simple Writing Activities, Classroom English, and Intercultural Activities. The texts offer newer teachers ways of presenting skill areas and even classroom management techniques. All are geared to beginning students except Intercultural Activities which ranges from beginners to intermediate. All the lesson ideas are cleanly laid out but some minimal prep is required. Language and terminology that is culturally specific to Britain turns up but it's nothing that white-out can't remedy for use in a BC classroom. Available at bookstores or from Oxford University Press.

From Canada, the Grab Bag series has grown to be an indispensable part of teachers' resource rooms. Begun as a newsletter, the duo that produced the teacher-friendly interactive classroom activities ventured into publishing. The titles include areas of importance to Elsa and ESL students in general. Some titles in the series: A Grab Bag of Canada, A Grab Bag of Socializing, of Telephone activities, of Health, of Work, and A Mixed Bag, Volume 1, which is a collection from some of the above titles. Sold as "reproducible by purchaser", the series has charts, games and activities that are ready-to-use and the communicative activities are adaptable for multi-level classrooms. The content and spelling is Canadian. No need for white-out. The series is available at bookstores or direct from Grab Bag Publishing.

Lenard Langlois, Shane Global Village-Yaletown



ELSA Net ***NEWS***

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