



## Contents

- 2 Update from the Ministry
- 3 ELSA Net Update
- 5 About ELSA Net Events
- 6 From Our ELSA Students
- 8 From Our Community
- 10 Tips For the Classroom

ELSA Net Newsletter is available in PDF format on the ELSA Net website:

[www.elsanet.org](http://www.elsanet.org)  
Contributions to future editions of the ELSA Net Newsletter are welcomed at [elsanet@telus.net](mailto:elsanet@telus.net)

James Harder,  
Newsletter Committee Chair  
Erika Del Carmen Fuchs,  
Layout

**ELSA Net**  
#208 - 2525 Commercial Dr  
Vancouver, BC  
V5N 4C1  
604.876.5758  
[elsanet@telus.net](mailto:elsanet@telus.net)  
[www.elsanet.org](http://www.elsanet.org)

## Canada Gives Karen Refugees a New Lease on Life

By Shruti P Joshi and Aruna Da Cruz, PICS

One of the most significant sentiments Karen refugees (pronounced Kirans) express about Canada is the supreme sense of freedom they experience here. "We feel free" is the unanimous comment the Karen students made about life in Canada in an interview with ELSA instructors at Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society (PICS), where they are enrolled in the English Language program.

Victims of hatred, Karens, were ousted from their own country, Myanmar (Burma), and fled to Thailand where they lived in Thai refugee camps before being brought to Canada at the behest of the United Nations.

Describing their lives in the refugee camps, one of the students said there were 14,000 Karen refugees living in nine refugee camps. "We had to hunt for our own food, make our own clothes and even build our own bamboo shelters. We had nothing, no security and no help. I didn't like it there at all," said Htoo.

After Canada decided to help the Karen refugees, each of them was interviewed and given a ticket to fly to Canada. "I had never sat in an airplane before but more than the excitement of flying for the first time, I was happy that Canada accepted us and gave us

a chance to make a life for ourselves," said Karen, who now lives in Surrey with her husband and two children.

When these refugees landed in Vancouver they were received by representatives of the Immigrant Services Society and housed in the Welcome House for a month. "At the Welcome House they gave us an orientation about life in Canada. Simple things such as how to use a stove and electricity, how to shop in a store, etc. were taught to us," said Saul.

Once they were a little familiar with life in Canada, they were moved to Surrey where these refugees live in an apartment complex with their families.

"We are very happy here in Canada. We are not frightened anymore," said Dah.

But, one of the greatest challenges the Karens face in Canada is a language barrier.

"We want to learn English as quickly as possible, so that we can find jobs and start earning money," said Karen.

It is interesting to note that despite having led such tough and difficult lives, and perhaps being scarred forever by the horrific experiences that they have had in their own country, their enthusiasm for learning and trying to be an integral part of the Canadian multicultural fabric has not diminished.

And to Canada for giving them a new lease on life they simply say, "Thank you very much, Canada".



*Karen people carrying water in their homeland*



## Update from the Ministry

### Update from the Settlement and Multiculturalism (SaM) Division

*By Alison Dudley, Manager Stakeholder Relations, Settlement and Multiculturalism Division*

#### 1. Labour Market Focused ELSA Levels 4/5

- The Division awarded contracts to implement this new service in 6 communities in the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley in February 2007.
- Classes are being delivered by Abbotsford Community Services, Burnaby English Language Centre, Burnaby School District, Douglas College, Immigrant Services Society, Vancouver Community College and MOSAIC.
- The Division hopes to expand labour market focused ELSA 4/5 across the province with anticipated new federal funding later this year, while also implementing non-labour market oriented ELSA at the intermediate level.

#### 2. Planning for New Immigrant Settlement Funding

- In December 2006, the federal government confirmed that BC would receive a significant increase in funding for settlement services for the current and upcoming fiscal year.
- The Ministry of Attorney General was tasked with developing a spending plan for the new money. The plan was in the process of being reviewed by the provincial Treasury Board at the time of writing.
- During consultations conducted with ELSA Net and AMSSA members over the past year, the Division identified the expansion of intermediate level ELSA and the reduction of existing waitlists for ELSA in some communities as among its top priorities. Should the spending plan be approved, the Division hopes to be able to address these priorities as soon as possible.
- The Division is also currently planning a series of follow-up consultations to solicit more detailed information on specific program interventions that could be considered to address other broad needs that have been identified.
- A follow-up consultation on services for children,

youth and their families was held on January 31<sup>st</sup> and a consultation on enhancing BCSAP Information and Support Services to better address labour market needs is scheduled for March 30<sup>th</sup>.

- Additional consultations will be organized between now and the summer on developing new programming to address the needs of multi-barriered clients; developing more alternative delivery programming to better meet the needs of smaller communities; and developing new programming to better meet the needs of immigrant seniors.

#### 3. 2007 Settlement Conference

- The 2007 Settlement Conference will take place on May 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> at the Metrotown Hilton in Burnaby.
- The conference committee, including representatives from ELSA Net and AMSSA, is currently finalizing the agenda which will include networking, training and planning opportunities.
- Approximately 350 front line staff, managers and ministry staff will be invited to participate. To encourage equal participation among service providers, each service provider will be allocated a specific number of seats at the conference.
- More detail on seats allocation will be provided to service providers when the registration process begins in April.
- For more information: <https://www.venuewest.com/2007/isc/>

#### 4. BCSAP Training Plan

- The Division is continuing to work with representatives from ELSA Net and AMSSA on the development of a training strategy to guide BCSAP training initiatives.
- In February, the training committee met with consultant Collin Mercer to review the first draft of a training framework he has developed which will form the basis of the training strategy.
- The Division will continue to provide updates on this initiative as it progresses.





## **ELSA Net Update from President & Coordinator**

### **President's Message: Rambling Thoughts from Your New President**

*By Yvonne Chard, ELSA Net President*

It doesn't seem like more than fourteen years since I went to my first meeting regarding LINC. Most of you have been around long enough to know of the many changes which have taken place since September 1992.

When the LINC program first started, apart from meetings and the training officers, our most important source of information was the numbered Rob Boldt memos. Remember them?

Do you remember SpodCom (I think that was the name—it didn't achieve fame)—a year of frustration equaled only by the arrival of STARS?

Now, positively, we have the ELSA Net association, we have staff members taking care of so many things on our behalf, and we have a much

better functioning STARS database. ELSA 4/5 has begun with the labour market program. The Ministry people are close at hand. We have better materials, a website, and formulated policies and procedures.

On the negative side, we also have copious amounts of report writing and proposal writing to do, which has been a major learning experience for some of us, and a constant frustration for most. In recent years, we have lost some of our great colleagues and there are fewer providers in the program.

I believe we are now moving into a happier climate for ELSA providers, with more money being available to ease the burden of waitlists and provide for clients who are not currently being served by ELSA classes. We

are entering a period of change, but it will be change with benefits for many people.

There are new developments looming in the extended educational community for adult ESL clients in BC, and these will need to be studied to see how they impact the ELSA program.

Your new Board is excited about working on the challenges that will arise in the year ahead and they hope to concentrate their efforts on looking at arising issues and possible improvements in ELSA programming.

Please feel free to call or write your regional reps, other Board members, or me at any time to give opinions or input, or ask questions.

### **Coordinator's Report**

*By Brenda Lohrenz, ELSA Net*



Spring seems to ramp up on sharing and networking opportunities for those in our sector, and this year is certainly no exception. Be sure to take advantage of the March 31 early-bird rate for the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual BC TEAL Conference being held in Vancouver May 3-5. Look for more information on the Opening Pathways ABEABC Conference in Chilliwack on May 9-12. And then, of course, the highly anticipated BC Settlement and Adaptation Provider Conference 'Redefining Immigrant

Settlement in BC' is being held in Burnaby on May 28 and 29. Events such as these highlight what it means to continue learning and growing in our own roles as we support our students to achieve their goals.

Our Act Now BC Curriculum Project is in full swing with curriculum consultant Jennifer Walsh Marr and our advisory committee with chair Katie Graham of S.U.C.C.E.S.S. leading the way. A big thank you to all ELSA instructors who did take part in the needs

assessment phase of this project – watch for a curriculum and classroom materials to come your way in the fall!

Finally, I'd like to thank my administrative assistant Erika Del Carmen Fuchs for all her dedication over the last couple of years, particularly in ensuring our Lower Mainland conferences are such tremendous successes. Thank you Erika, and best wishes with your plans to attend the TESOL Program at VCC this spring!



## Community Perspective

### Profile of Karen refugees

*From ISS Information Sheet*



*Karen refugees with PICS staff in Surrey*

**Background:** As part of the international search for durable solutions for over 130,000 Burmese refugees living in refugee camps in Thailand, several countries have agreed to accept Burmese refugees for resettlement. Canada has agreed to accept 810 refugees from the camps as part of Canada's Resettlement Assistance Program for Government Assisted Refugees. Over 200 of these refugees were destined for British Columbia between November 2006 and March 2007. While the refugees are originally from Burma (Myanmar), the majority who will be resettled to Canada are Karen refugees. The Karen does not compose a single ethnic group; there are, in fact, some twenty Karen sub-groups. They speak two mutually unintelligible languages: S'gaw and Pwo. The refugees who are arriving in BC are predominantly S'gaw Karen.

All Government Assisted Refugees arrive in Canada as legal permanent residents.

**Arrival in BC:** Since the beginning of November 2006, 115 S'gaw Karen refugees have arrived in BC, comprised of 21 families with children and 14 single adults. Additional groups of Karen refugees are expected to arrive in BC in the first quarter of 2007.

Of the recently arrived refugees, all have spent a considerable time in refugee camps, ranging from 11 years to 28 years. Most of the children will have experienced life only in a refugee camp.

**Religion:** Most Karen have strong religious beliefs, either as Baptists or as Buddhists. The majority of the refugees arriving in BC are Baptists.

**Language:** For the refugees who have recently arrived in BC, English language skills are one of their main concerns. However, many of the refugees speak varying levels of several languages: S'gaw Karen, Burmese, Thai and English. Students may have studied English for many years, yet never have had to produce anything orally, so their reading and grammar skills may be more highly developed than their speaking.

**Health:** Malaria is the main health threat in the refugee camps, but respiratory infections, diarrhoea, and skin infections are also prevalent. Western medicines are known to the refugees and these are well received; however, the services they received in the camps are so basic as to have little resemblance to a Western medical clinic.

**Housing:** Housing has been found for the recently arrived refugees in the Guildford/Cedarhill districts of Surrey, and it is hoped that housing in the same area will be found for the following groups of Karen refugees who arrive over the next few months.

**Education:** Many of the refugees were originally subsistence farmers in their homeland, but education plays an important role in Karen culture. A large number of the parents who have recently arrived were teachers in the camps, and the children are eager to go to school here in Canada. However, many are worried about communication difficulties due to limited English language skills. The children will be entering all levels of school, from kindergarten to Grade 12.

For more in-depth information on the Karen, contact ISS at 530 Drake Street, Vancouver, 604.684.7498; or [settlement@issbc.org](mailto:settlement@issbc.org), or see: *Karen Cultural Profile – a tool for settlement workers and sponsors*, IOM Bangkok, 2006.



*One of the hometowns where the Karen people come from*



## About ELSA Net Events

### ELSA Net Pro-D Day Workshops

By Sabena Soo, ELSA Instructor, Vancouver Formosa Academy

When signing up for ELSA Net Lower Mainland/Surrey/Delta/Fraser Valley/Northern Professional Development Day workshops back in November, I said to myself, this year, I'm going to pick something for me. Instead of choosing something focusing on methodology and practice in the classroom, like I usually do, I opted for something that I would be able to use on more of a personal level—something that would help me appreciate myself and others.

In the morning session I attended the "STARS Refresher Course for Beginner Users." Although I had no idea how the program worked, I was hoping that by the end of the workshop I would be able to take with me a bit of STARS knowledge, as well as an understanding of what it is like for others who use the system regularly. Now, when a student registers or graduates, I can see the process in my head. My attending this workshop helps me appreciate the effort STARS users make in ensuring everything is up to par when it comes to student registration, attendance, graduation, termination, and so on; kudos to those who use the system regularly!

After the lunch and the keynote speaker presentation, I attended the "Applying Emotional Intelligence" workshop. It was wonderful. By the end of this workshop, I was more aware of my understanding and observations of others around me. I learned that it is important to respect myself and others. It helped me to understand the need to step back and acknowledge that situations need evaluation before reaction. That, in turn, has taught me to manage my emotions and better understand the emotions of others around me at my workplace.

For new teachers, expectations going into an ELSA workshop may be different from those of teachers who have been in the field for a long time. As veterans of the ELSA Program, it is our job to make sure that with every workshop we attend, we take from it something valuable. It isn't always a method, worksheet, or teaching activity; it could be just something that rebuilds, opens our eyes—something just for us.

### AGM Workshop: Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace

By Flairy Bubel, Richmond Continuing Education

After feasting on a nutritious lunch of souvlaki and pasta salad, attendees at the January 26th ELSA Net AGM also had abundant "food for thought" to digest, thanks to Maureen Hannah's interesting and interactive workshop: Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace. For almost two hours, participants explored strategies to enhance their emotional intelligence by developing the following key competencies:

**Self regard:** the ability to respect and accept yourself—your resources, abilities and limits. This includes the self-confidence to express your feelings and desires, and the ability to avoid blaming yourself for something that is out of your control.

**Empathy:** the ability to appreciate and read the feelings of others in a compassionate and nonjudgmental manner.

**Assertiveness:** the ability to express feelings, beliefs and thoughts (and to be aware of the emotional impact these have), while maintaining your focus on outcomes.

**Impulse control:** the ability to resist or delay an impulse (or "amygdaloid hijacking") by taking a deep breath and thinking about what you are reacting to and your most responsible interpretation of the situation.

**Flexibility:** the ability to adjust your own emotions, thoughts and behaviours, and to gain new information and insights by engaging with others.

For those still hungering for more on this topic, Maureen recommends the works of Daniel Goleman: *The*

*Emotionally Intelligent Workplace* (co-authored with Cary Cherniss; John Wiley & Sons, 2001), and *Working With Emotional Intelligence* (Bantam Books, 1998).

Bon appetit!



ELSA Net Pro D Day participants having fun while learning!



## From Our ELSA Students

### An Introduction to Ice Hockey in Canada

*By Annemieke Vrijmoed, New Directions-Langley*

The students of New Directions in Langley were introduced to ice hockey last February.

The Langley Chiefs visited our school and answered all the questions the students had. We were given complimentary tickets and most of the students and their families went to the game on Saturday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>. We had a great time. Some of the reactions of the students were as follows:

Rhonda: "The game was very energetic!"

Beatriz: "It's good to be together with all families!"

Rosa: "It was the first time I saw a hockey game. My daughter warned me that there would be fighting, but it was not very bad, only a little! The music made us feel excited!"

Yan: "It's good exercise for the players. The hockey game was a good chance to bring the students and their families together!"

Mi Jung: "My son said it was scary, but very exciting!"

Although the Langley Chiefs did not win the game, we all had a blast and it was a great introduction to ice hockey in Canada! The greatest surprise was seeing a couple from Colombia that had graduated three years



*ELSA students and families from New Directions-Langley at a hockey game*

ago from ELSA classes. They had been introduced to the game through their ELSA classes and now came out to the game with their kids on their own. It was great to see them enjoying life in Langley and to realize how well they are settling in the community as a happy family.

### Tough Life

*By Loon, ELSA 3 Student, Chilliwack Community Services*

I've been in Canada for 3 ½ years. Since I stepped onto the plane to fly here, I have felt different. I found out that I had a hard time to communicate in English, even though I hadn't reached Canada yet. The difficult time was more extreme when I arrived here. I felt frustrated and uncomfortable talking to people. However, I got married after I had been here for a year. So far, my married life is going well.

Today, my routine is changing. I have to go to school to learn English and I'm enjoying it very much. I'd never seen snow, tall mountains, and huge forests before. It's just amazing! There are

also brilliantly colorful plants and flowers. They're showing up everywhere. Those things are very attractive to me. When I was in Thailand, I never imagined how cold the weather in Canada is. It surprised me. I'd never worn big and heavy clothes before. But now I have to, otherwise I'll freeze.

Canada and Thailand are entirely different. It's not easy for me to create a quality life here. But if I give up, I'll never win. Besides, I have a good support in my husband. I don't know how long it will take me to get to my goal. My goal is to achieve a successful life. I'd be very happy if I could go to that point. But if it is not to be, that's okay. At least I have a dream.



## Provincial News

### Summit on Learners and Literacy

By Ginny Yildirm, MOSAIC-North Shore Multicultural Society

On Friday January 26, 2007, Premier Gordon Campbell hosted the Summit on Learners and Literacy at the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue in Vancouver. Over 100 Delegates from around the Province attended the daylong event which included guest presenters as well as open forums for the exchange of opinions and concerns. The Summit coincided with the publication of the Canadian Council on Learning's Report: "The State of Learning in Canada – No Time for Complacency". Both the report and the Summit focused on the following four areas of literacy: Early Childhood Learning, Learning in School, Adult Learning, and Aboriginal Learning.

The Premier took the opportunity to

announce a new 27-million-dollar investment to support literacy in British Columbia under the name ReadNow BC. He noted that recent studies indicate that more than one million adults in British Columbia do not have the literacy skills necessary to fill out a job application or read the newspaper.

A highlight of the Summit was the opportunity to listen to learners describe their struggles and successes on the road toward literacy. Educators asked the learners what literacy programs could do to remove obstacles and accommodate learners. These were some of the learners' recommendations: small classes, trained educators, flexible class schedules, childcare assistance, and counseling support. The learners noted that achieving literacy not only improved their financial situations

but also their self-esteem, sense of belonging in their communities, and their abilities as parents.

Two successful workplace learning programs were highlighted at the Summit, one sponsored by Teck Cominco Metals Ltd and the other at Teleflex Canada. These two employers make lifelong learning an integral part of their work environment with great success. Clearly, partnerships with the business community are central to enhancing the overall literacy of the BC workforce.

While the ELSA Program was not specifically mentioned at the conference, the immigrant learning experience was highlighted by two speakers, one a high school student from Hong Kong and the other a single mother from El Salvador who is currently attending an ESL program at the Canuck's Family Education Centre.

### 1-888-READ-234: New Literacy BC Hotline for English Classes Launched

By Mark Campbell, Literacy BC

On February 26<sup>th</sup> Premier Gordon Campbell announced the first phase of the ReadNow Action Plan to improve literacy in British Columbia, which includes a toll-free number – 1-888-READ-234 – open 7 to 7, five days a week. Information and referral specialists at Literacy BC are operating this service, which helps people of all ages find and access the literacy programs and resources in their communities that meet their needs.

Part of the mandate of this new service is to help

people find out about publicly-funded ESL programs in their areas (with on-the-line interpretation available in all of BC's most common languages).

For this purpose, the referral specialists are using the directory of programs built and maintained by ELSA Net. Once the anticipated marketing of the toll-free number

to people with a first language other than English is launched, this is likely to become one of the primary means for connecting aspiring ESL learners with appropriate programming.





## From Our Community

### Adult Basic Education Association of BC—Update

By Yvonne Chard, Delview Adult Centre

The Adult Basic Education Association of BC provides an annual spring conference for adult educators and adult learners. Each year it is held in a different region of BC. The Association and its conference planners are all volunteers, and everyone is welcome at these conferences. The ABEABC also publishes *Groundwork*, a professional publication for adult basic educators in British Columbia. Each year the ABEABC provides a bursary to a student in every member organization.

The ABEABC is often approached provincially for input on adult learning. The membership currently includes educators working in Continuing Education and Colleges, Aboriginal agencies, prisons, and on-line learning.

This year we are hosting the following event:

Opening Pathways Conference, May 9-12, 2007, at the University College of the Fraser Valley, Chilliwack. The focus of this conference is on the entry needs of colleges,

universities and workplaces, and the availability of different types of testing and qualifications to enable such entry. Prior learning and credentials evaluation topics will be included, as well as instruction for the essential skills needed and types of courses available for progress from ESL and adult literacy to graduation. The conference begins with a social evening and registration on Wednesday night, and continues until noon on Saturday.

There are one-day registration fees also, with special prices for adult learners, and an early bird price. We are still looking for presenters for the conference. Information on the keynote speakers will soon be published. Membership is available free to anyone attending the conference, or at posted prices throughout the year. The Board members of the ABEABC are all voluntarily working for the association and would be glad to hear from you at any time.

The ABEABC website is located at [www.abeabc.ca](http://www.abeabc.ca).

### “Open Doors” Conference Brings Together Adult Students in North Delta

By Dr. Alyson Caouette, Vice Principal of Delta Continuing Education

The third annual “Open Doors” conference for adult students was held on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. The 2007 conference, organized by students and staff of Delview Adult Learning Centre, brought together about 75 participants to network and attend presentations. Many of them were ELSA students.

Students from Delview Adult Learning Centre, one of two adult learning centres operated by Delta School District’s Continuing Education branch, selected various topics of interest for this year, including the following:

- “Healthy Eating”—presented by Elle Eriksson, a private nutritional consultant;
- “Pathways to Graduation”—presented by Dr. Alyson Caouette, vice-principal of Delta Continuing Education;
- “Protecting Yourself from Identity Theft”—presented by Jeff Burton from BC Crime Prevention;
- and “Crossing Borders”—presented by April Der from the Canada Border Services Agency.

The conference included a healthful nutrition break and a light lunch. Sponsors of the conference were

Delta School District, Delview Adult Learning Centre, Save-On Foods, and Envision Credit Union.

The students take great pride in organizing this event. With staff helping out and guiding them, the event is exciting and it’s a valuable learning experience for the students. They are able to stretch beyond their comfort zones and get experience in planning, contacting speakers, and a little bit of public speaking.

Delta School District’s Continuing Education branch offers more than 700 courses each year to approximately 10,000 registrants. Programs are available to learners of all ages, from children through to adults. Programming includes Youth Activities, High School Completion, Adult Basic Education, computer and workplace training, first aid, and a wide range of personal development courses.

For more information about courses offered by Delta Continuing Education, including upcoming summer academic and youth programs, go to the Delta “Continuing Education” link <http://web.deltasd.bc.ca/coned/Home.asp>.





## From Our Community

### BC TEAL 39th Annual Conference: ESL In a Global and Changing World May 3-5, 2007: Vancouver Community College, City Centre Campus

Keynote Dr. MaryAnn Christison will speak on the topic of creating brain-friendly classrooms for English language learners. Keynote Dr. Bonny Norton will speak on the topic of identity and language learning.

This year's conference includes a variety of workshops, a publishers' display, socializing & networking time, and institutional visits. Some workshops that may be useful to ELSA instructors include: *Teaching ESL with Chants, Music and Movement* (Pam Southwell), *Using Students'*

*Strengths for Helping Them Learn Grammar* (David Kehe & Peggy Kehe), *Fluency Writing: Recording the Changes Within* (Janice Penner & Ayah Ouziel) and *Immigrant Parents and Educators: Working for Equitable Family-School Relations* (Jolanta Garus).

The early bird deadline for registration is March 31, 2007. For more information, contact: BC TEAL. Tel: 604.736.6330 or [admin@admin@bctéal.org](mailto:admin@admin@bctéal.org), or go to the website: [www.bctéal.org](http://www.bctéal.org).



*Visitors to the Fair*

### AMSSA Multicultural Health Fair

*By Vivianne de Pass, AMSSA Multicultural Health Fair*

AMSSA's 2007 Multicultural Health Fair was held on Saturday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Croatian Cultural Center in Vancouver. The day commenced with an Opening Ceremony with honored VIP guests who provided words of support, including Minister Wally Oppal, Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism; Councillor David Cadman, City of Vancouver; and Ms. Shannon Griffin, BC Mental Health & Addiction Services, PHSA. Following the ceremony, *The Carnival Band* kicked off the fair with a lively, musical march to the Exhibitor Hall.

With almost 2,000 participants attending throughout the day, the Fair exceeded expectations and noticeably increased access to health care and information among BC's multicultural community. Activities

and participation included 50 exhibitors representing a variety of health organizations and community agencies, 14 workshops in multiple languages covering a range of key health topics, interactive fitness demonstrations, five multicultural performances, and four ethnic cooking demonstrations that educated and entertained participants in 8 languages. In addition, the public was able to participate in health screenings including blood pressure and blood glucose testing, and body mass index. The UBC Faculty of Dentistry hosted a dental corner where information was provided on proper dental care and hygiene for adults and children.

The third annual Multicultural Health Fair would not have been possible without the support of AMSSA's funders, sponsors, donors, presenters and a team of 80 volunteers whose energy and hard work contributed to the success of the fair.

For more information on the Multicultural Health Fair and AMSSA, visit [www.amssa.org](http://www.amssa.org).



*Dance performance*



## Tips For the Classroom

### Excerpt from Article “Bright Ideas: Tips for Teaching ESL to the Elderly”

By Heide Spruck Wrigley, Coalition of Limited English Speaking Elderly—LiteracyWork International



*From a project with the Coalition for the Limited English speaking Elderly [www.clese.org](http://www.clese.org). The site has lots of good information –including a full curriculum that people can download. There are also videos that show learners in problem solving activities and a model lesson by a teacher who works with a Bosnian group. There is no password or other requirement and people can use the lessons any way they want to—in fact we want them to!*

Like all ESL learners, elders want to learn. They want to be able to communicate. They don't like feeling dependent on others. Elders also share common challenges in learning English and so there are issues to consider in teaching them. We can accommodate elders' needs by being mindful of many of the following.

#### Program Location Characteristics

- Close to students' homes
- Easily accessible by public transportation
- Special assistance available for getting to classes for those who have difficulty getting to class
- Wheelchair accessible ramps, doorways, and bathrooms
- Close to other needed services such as senior meals and social services

#### Classroom Characteristics

- Bright, non-glare lighting
- Good acoustics
- Sufficient table space for writing
- Sufficient space for wheelchairs, canes, and walkers
- Adequate heating and cooling system
- Non-slip stairs and floors
- Comfortable chairs providing back support, adequate for students of different physical sizes
- Short distance to accessible bathrooms

#### Time and Frequency of Classes

Elders usually prefer classes in the morning. To reinforce what they are learning, classes for the elderly should meet at least six hours a week, three or four times a week.

#### Limiting Mental and Physical Barriers

Elderly students have a range of physical and mental problems; some problems affect their ability to learn. These may include depression, preoccupation with personal problems, hearing and vision difficulties, and learning disabilities. The teacher should identify the problem, make referrals to a specialist if needed, and make appropriate accommodations in the classroom.

#### Hearing Impairment

- Reduce background noise
- Stand in good lighting with the mouth in clear view
- Speak clearly, loudly and slowly
- Use facial expressions or gestures to give additional meaning cues
- Check students' hearing aids
- Reinforce oral language with visual materials
- Make referrals to hearing specialists or doctors as appropriate.

#### Vision Problems

- Provide adequate lighting, avoiding glare
- Use print materials in dark type on a light matte background
- Use a 14 point font size or larger
- Combine upper-and lower-case letters
- Minimize use of different type faces on one page
- Avoid wavy lines and dots
- Make referrals to vision specialists or doctors as appropriate

#### Using Native Language

“Native language” refers to the use of the students' first language. The native language can be a useful tool to build content knowledge, alleviate anxiety in the classroom, and explain concepts in learning English. One effective strategy is the “review/preview method” in which the teacher (or an interpreter for the teacher) introduces a lesson in the native language, conducts the lesson in English, and then switches back to the native language to check understanding and answer questions.

If we can provide a learning environment that is sensitive to these conditions, we can enhance the learning abilities of our valued elders.



## New Resources For the Classroom & Other News

### Child Care Resource and Referral Services Suffer Cuts

By Erika Del Carmen Fuchs, ELSA Net

Recently child care workers from different ELSA programs have brought to my attention the effects that cuts to Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) services across the province will have on them.

One child care worker from outside the Lower Mainland states: "The only thing I can say is the frustration I have knowing CCRR will be closing its doors this fall. A tremendous loss, it will affect many caregivers."

While the BC government recently announced that the services would be cut to a \$9-million-dollar annual budget, instead of the original \$3-

million-dollar budget that was announced on January 5<sup>th</sup>, this will still have a serious impact on child care centres and workers province-wide. The original annual budget was \$14 million dollars, which means that even with the recent announcement, CCRR services will suffer an overall \$5-million-dollar funding cut.

In addition, a West Coast Child Care Resource Centre press release states: "the impending cuts to the Child Care Operating Funding program effective July 1<sup>st</sup> still stand."

Staff at West Coast told me that CCRR services are still waiting for contracts and mandates; in the meantime some CCRR staff will be cut, as a result of

the 35% overall budget reduction.

For more information on the cuts and work being done by Child Care advocates, please see the websites for West Coast Child Care Resource Centre and Coalition of Childcare Associations at: [www.wstcoast.org](http://www.wstcoast.org) and [www.cccabc.bc.ca](http://www.cccabc.bc.ca).



### My Life in Canada

By Zlata, ELSA 3 Student, Chilliwack Community Services

I have been in Canada for almost two years. My life has been different since I came to Canada. My family stayed in my county and that's very difficult for me. Then, I liked snow too. But in Chilliwack, and my neighborhood, there isn't much, sometimes only very little. Snow is only on the high mountains around me. I liked walking in the forest in my county, but here it is almost impossible because the forests are very thick and sometimes dangerous. Many wild animals live in them. When I traveled around Canada I saw a lot of wild animals—bears, wolves, moose, buffalo, mountain sheep, and others. It was beautiful, but I never saw a cougar. I hope I will see one some time.

Now I can't travel because I must go to school to learn English. It's very good for me. I like walking in the country too. But here I have a little problem because I don't know where it is possible. I must look for some places. If the weather is cold, I like to visit Harrison Hot Springs. It's wonderful. I have changed a great deal since I got married and came to Canada.

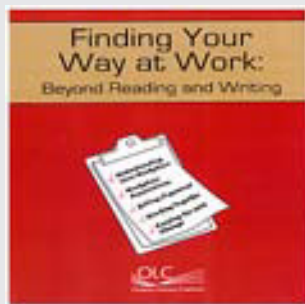
### Workplace Literacy Resource: Finding Your Way at Work: Beyond Reading and Writing

Sarah Bukhari. Toronto: Ontario Literacy Coalition, 2006.

Written for adult literacy learners as the primary audience, *Finding Your Way at Work: Beyond Reading and Writing* is a resource designed to help learners and instructors explore ideas related to keeping a job. Its activities explore the assumptions, practices and expectations in today's varied workplaces and comprehensively address key skills and competencies.

This book is written for adult literacy learners in group settings, using Ontario's Literacy and Basic Skills levels 2, 3 and 4 as its guide. It examines employability

skills while providing literacy skill practice. It is meant to address the gap between materials that develop literacy skills and materials that assume literacy skills in order to develop employability skills. There are materials in each unit for instructors and for learners.



This resource is \$50 for non-members. Go to [www.on.literacy.ca](http://www.on.literacy.ca) to order. To order OLC publications, complete and mail your order form with your cheque to the following address: The Ontario Literacy Coalition, 65 Wellesley Street East, Suite 503, Toronto, ON M4Y 1G7.

## ELSA Net Overview

English Language Services for Adults (ELSA) is a funding stream of the British Columbia Settlement and Adaptation Program. ELSA Net is a society of ELSA Service Providers, which consists of organizations such as settlement agencies (non-profit organizations), community and university colleges, school board continuing education departments, and private schools offering ELSA Programs.

The purpose of ELSA Net is to facilitate the effective delivery of English Language Services for Adults throughout the Province of British Columbia taking into account and recognizing regional differences and needs.

The objectives of ELSA Net are to carry out the following functions to assist in attaining the purpose of ELSA Net:

- (a) Recommend policies and procedures to the Ministry (Ministry of the Attorney General) regarding ELSA;
- (b) Provide a forum for networking by Members;
- (c) Provide professional development opportunities for employees of the Members;
- (d) Promote program research and development;
- (e) Establish and maintain an effective structure for communication and coordination among Members;
- (f) Provide representation of and information about ELSA and ELSA Net at the local, provincial and national level; and
- (g) Provide advice to the Ministry regarding ELSA.



# ELSA Net

**English Language Services for Adults Network**

**#208 - 2525 Commercial Drive  
Vancouver, British Columbia  
V5N 4C1**

**elsanet@telus.net  
www.elsanet.org**