

Occupational ESL “Lessons Learned” Conference

March 13 to 15, 2006

Delta Edmonton Centre Suite Hotel – Edmonton Alberta

Sponsored by:

**Alberta Human Resources and Employment
and
Citizenship and Immigration Canada**

Summary Document

Table of Contents

AGENDA..... i

A SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION..... 1

CONFERENCE EVALUATIONS..... 29

Occupational ESL “Lessons Learned” Conference
March 13 to 15, 2006
Delta Edmonton Centre Suite Hotel
10222 – 102 Street
Edmonton, AB

AGENDA

Monday, March 13th, 2006

7 p.m. - 9 p.m. **Conference “Meet and Greet”**

8 p.m. - 8:10 p.m. **Welcoming Remarks**

Tuesday, March 14th

7:30 –
8:30 a.m.

Breakfast

8:45

Opening Remarks

Federal and Provincial Government Representatives

9:00

Goals for the Conference

Carolyn Dieleman and Rocky Gushuliak

9:15

Overview of the Day

Jim Klingle, Facilitator

9:30

Occupational ESL from a National Perspective

Althea Williams

9:45

Presentations on ESL Occupational Projects Underway in the Engineering Related/Oil and Gas Sector

10:30

Break

10:45

Presentations on ESL Occupational Projects Underway in the Engineering Related/Oil and Gas Sector (cont.)

11:30

Key Learnings from ESL Occupational Projects Presented in the Engineering Related/Oil and Gas Sector

Working in their table groups, participants will discuss the following questions:

- What did you find surprising/interesting about this morning's presentations?
- What key learnings did you gain from the presentations this morning?

Following their discussions, an opportunity will be provided to hear a sample of responses from each of the table groups.

Noon	Lunch and Office Time
1:15	Presentations on Newly Underway ESL Occupational Projects in the Engineering Related/Oil and Gas Sector
1:45	<p>Large Group Question and Answer Session</p> <p>A question and answer session will be held with all the presenters with ESL Occupational Projects in the Engineering Related/Oil and Gas Sector.</p>
2:45	Break
3:00	<p>Break Out Session</p> <p>Participant move into three pre-selected break out groups to discuss the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you as providers view the occupational model of ESL delivery? • How do your learners view the occupational model of ESL delivery? • How does the community view the occupational model of ESL delivery? <p>One person in each group will act as a recorder to capture major feedback. Each group will then create a written poster for display in the main conference room.</p>
3:40	<p>Break Out 'Poster' Display</p> <p>Posters will be displayed for participants to review.</p>
4:00	<p>Presentation: "2005 – 2015 Occupational Outlook"</p> <p>Ali Abdelrahman, of Data Development and Analysis Branch, Alberta Human Resources and Employment, will present their 2005-2015 Occupational Outlook. An opportunity will be provided for participants' questions.</p>
4:40	<p>Closing Comments and Announcements</p> <p>Carolyn Dieleman and Rocky Gushuliak</p>

Wednesday, March 15th

7:30 –
8:30 a.m.

Breakfast

8:45

Overview of the Day

Jim Klingle, Facilitator

9:00

Presentations on ESL Occupational Projects Underway in Health Related Sectors

9:45

Large Group Question and Answer Session

A question and answer session will be held with the presenters on ESL Occupational Projects in Health Related Sectors.

10:15

Break

10:30

Presentations on ESL Occupational Projects Underway in Manitoba (includes Question and Answer Session)

11:10

Presentations and a Question and Answer Opportunity on ESL Occupational Projects Underway in Various Other Sectors

11:50

Review of Process for Afternoon

Jim Klingle, Facilitator

Noon

Lunch and Office Time

1:15

Break Out Session

Participants move into three pre-selected break out groups to discuss the following questions:

1. How can we effectively and efficiently support the sharing of information about what works/does not work about our projects?
2. Are we achieving the outcomes of the program model and are these the best outcomes for the immigrant group being served (skilled professionals with high end Stage 2 'intermediate' ESL capacities)?
3. What can funders do to make this program more accessible to support a broader array of communities in offering occupational ESL programs?
4. What are three key insights or learnings you take away from this two-day conference?

A member of each group will capture responses on a flipchart for another member of the group to present at the 3 p.m. Plenary Session.

2:45

Break

3:00 **Plenary Session Feedback**

An opportunity will be provided for each of the breakout groups to present their responses to the first three break out session questions.

3:45 **Plenary Session Feedback: Lessons Learned**

In a round robin report back, each of the break out groups will present their three key learnings from the two day conference.

4:00 **Closing Comments and Acknowledgements**

4:15 **Conference Concludes**

Carolyn Dieleman and Rocky Gushuliak

Occupational ESL “Lessons Learned” Conference

A SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION

Tuesday, March 14th

Opening Remarks

Carolyn Dieleman, of Alberta Human Resources and Employment Intergovernmental Relations and Immigration Branch, opened the conference by welcoming attendees and introducing three speakers: Shannon Marchand, Executive Director of Intergovernmental Relations and Immigration, and two representatives of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Rob Vineburg, Regional Director General, Prairies/Northwest Territories Region and Rocky Gushliak, Program Advisor, Prairies/Northwest Territories Region.

Shannon Marchand welcomed everyone to the event, the first provincial conference to focus on Enhanced Language Training projects. He acknowledged Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) as a co-funder and welcomed CIC representatives from Winnipeg and Ottawa. He also thanked ATESL for helping to organize the conference, and Carolyn and Rocky for making it “a reality on very short notice.”

Shannon began by describing the Enhanced Language Training program as creating new opportunities to partner with service providers and collectively test new approaches to meet the needs of immigrants. Immigrants bring educational qualifications and global work experience that should help them to participate in our labour market. The challenge is to find and test ways to address newcomers’ language needs – needs that can prevent them from practicing their professions and limit their ability to have their qualifications formally recognized. Shannon pointed out that service providers in the audience are meeting the challenge by developing new tools, approaches and resources that will improve processes for various professional groups. Service providers have also developed relationships with employers that not only enhance the success of specific projects, but will have an ongoing impact, by helping employers to find effective ways to include immigrants in their workforce.

Shannon said that over the next two days, everyone would have an opportunity to learn from the vision and approaches of the ELT projects. As funders, AHRE and CIC were also interested in learning what additional measures they can provide to support the success of the projects. He said, “How can we inform our colleagues in other departments as well as the public about the need and opportunity for such pilot projects? We also want to learn about the modifications you recommend to this model.”

Shannon described the importance of the ELT delivery model to the continuum of ESL programming supported by AHRE. It is an equally important part of the Alberta government’s immigration strategy. Announced last fall, the strategy identifies four key strategic directions: welcoming immigrants, attracting immigrants, living in Alberta and working in Alberta. ELT projects primarily address working in Alberta and support the long-term retention of immigrants. In conclusion, Shannon said the conference was a first step in better understanding best practices as developed through the hands-on projects, and he hoped that everyone would find it interesting and rewarding.

Rob Vineberg spoke next, explaining that the Enhanced Language Training program was introduced in 2003 on a very small scale but now has federal funding of 20 million dollars annually. Despite the program's short track record, CIC is increasingly becoming convinced that "this is the way to go." The flexible, innovative approach of the ELT program is giving people the tools they need to speak English at a level that allows them to integrate into Canada and work in their chosen professions. Rob hoped that over the next two days, attendees would get a better idea of what is happening in the program nationally and learn from projects taking place in Alberta and elsewhere. He stressed that it is "not just the successful experiences that we need to learn from, but also the ones that didn't work well, so as to avoid repeating mistakes."

Describing CIC as very pleased to work with the province of Alberta through HRE, Rob said that both governments see the ELT program as a key way of developing and retaining the skills this province needs as its economy continues to boom. He then announced that effective April 1, CIC will devolve administration of the ELT program to the regions and, accordingly, will hire two new co-ordinators, one for Northern Alberta and one for Southern Alberta. Rob closed by thanking the conference organizers – ATESL, AHRE and his own staff – and wishing attendees a very successful two days.

Then Carolyn Dieleman spoke. She explained that when asked about her expectations for the conference, she would say she hoped to bring people together to share their "aha-s." When she visited the programs around the province, staff shared their insights, thoughts and questions with her in a way that allowed her to understand what went into a proposal, from conceptualization to program delivery. Some of the "aha-s" occurred at the very beginning, others when program staff members were trying to find learners, and others in the actual delivery. Carolyn observed: "If the delivery didn't quite match the concept you had for the program, you made changes. Sometimes you tweaked it and sometimes you made significant changes."

That, she explained, is what Enhanced Language Training allows – innovation, to experiment with things, to learn. Learning from the experience and being able to share what was learned will strengthen the program. The important thing is to recognize that, "They're not mistakes, they're learnings. What you're doing is responding to what your learners present. They come in different formations, groups, and circumstances than first anticipated, so you say aha, we have to do it this way instead."

Carolyn saw the conference as "the beginning of lessons learned, a chance to share." More time and discussion will be needed before best practices can be articulated, and the conference is the first step towards that. She described it as an opportunity also to find more tangible and concrete ways to make connections that have lasting value. She encouraged the audience, "to speak from the depth of your experience and knowledge, representing what your learners have taught you about this program."

Rocky Gushliak said this was an exciting time for integration programs, particularly given the potential for additional funding. He has been in the program for about one year, and has responsibility for ELT and LINC. In light of the transitioning to the local CIC offices, Rocky wants to educate himself better about projects in Alberta. He told the audience he wanted to learn about service providers' experience in delivering the program and the creative thinking and solutions they developed in moving ahead.

Rocky said he also wanted to hear about other things funders might do. Funders need to respect certain terms and conditions, he said, but it may be possible to move on things outside those parameters, and then put effort into changing the terms and conditions. He wanted to hear about things that work well, as well as ideas about how funders can align resources to do more of the same, or new things. He was looking forward to working with Alberta, which has been a unique model for partnering. Rocky pointed out that ELT is not a stand-alone program but one on a continuum of services offered by CIC. The question for him is: how do we best align services between the provincial government and CIC so we can do a really good job in Alberta with the resources we have?

Overview of the Day

Next, Jim Klinge of Emerging Directions Consulting Ltd. introduced himself as the moderator-facilitator for the session. Jim described his role as meeting manager and timekeeper, moving things along so that things start and finish on time. He explained that the conference was designed to balance the opportunity by participants to listen to and learn about projects, as well as to discuss what was heard. Jim said that one of the themes of the conference is key learnings, so a recurring question will be: what did you learn? After reviewing the agenda for the day, Jim introduced Althea Williams, Manager of the Enhanced Learning Training Initiative, Citizenship and Immigration, Ottawa.

Occupational ESL from a National Perspective

Althea Williams' presentation is provided in a separate PowerPoint document. However, she made the following two points that do not appear on the presentation:

- Planning is underway to hold a national conference on ELT during November 2006, probably in Vancouver. The conference will give people across the country a chance to share “lessons learned.”
- In keeping with the principles of the initiative, any tools that are developed will be shared nationally. One of Althea's priorities for 2006 is to catalogue and share those tools, so she is interested in hearing ideas on how to do this. Some of the questions she is considering are: should the information be shared all at once, without first analyzing the tools to determine which ones are better? In cases where two tools have been developed, should service providers have the option to choose between them? Or should she assign a group of people to analyze the tools? Althea is interested in starting the process as soon as possible and welcomes feedback from participants. althea.williams@cic.gc.ca

Presentations on ESL Occupational Projects

A large part of the morning and early afternoon was devoted to presentations by service providers on ESL occupational projects underway or newly underway in the engineering related and oil and gas sectors.

Presenters had been asked beforehand to organize their material using a presentation template. Most presenters used a PowerPoint format.

Lists of the titles of the presentations are provided throughout this summary document along with the names and e-mail addresses of the presenters (where available). An asterisk beside a title indicates that the presentation was provided in a presentation template while those unmarked are in a PowerPoint format. Both types of documents are provided in separate attachments that accompany this summary report.

2004 Projects

Project Name: ***English for Skilled Immigrants****
 Organization: Keyano College, Fort McMurray
 Presenter(s): Ms. Peg Carson peg.carson@keyano.ca

Project Name: ***English Through an Engineering Pipeline***
 Organization: NorQuest College, Edmonton
 Presenter(s): Ms. Anna DeLuca anna.deluca@norquest.ca
 Mr. Paul Holmes paul.holmes@norquest.ca

Project Name: ***Enhanced Language Training****
 Organization: Calgary Immigrant Educational Society, Calgary
 Presenter(s): Ms. I-Hui (Eva) Su eslvolunteer@immigrant.education.ca

Project Name: ***English Development for Professional Training***
 Organization: Maple Leaf Academy, Calgary
 Presenter(s): Ms. Susan Appleby

2005 Projects

Project Name: ***International Engineering Bridging Program***
 Organization: Bredin Institute, Edmonton
 Presenter(s): Mrs. Genai McLeod gmcload@bredin.ab.ca

Project Name: ***Benchmarking the Language Demands of the Engineering Profession in Alberta***
 Organization: Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, Edmonton
 Presenter(s): Mrs. Emilie Coyle ecoyle@emcn.ab.ca

Project Name: ***Fast Track for Transition to Technical Careers***
 Organization: NorQuest College Edmonton
 Presenter(s): Mr. Lyle Black lyle.black@norquest.ca

Key Learnings from Presentations

Towards the end of the morning, participants were asked to work with others at their table to discuss two questions:

What did you find surprising/interesting about this morning's presentations?

What key learnings did you gain from the presentations?

Surprising and Interesting

- Employers in Alberta are hiring immigrants at a CLB 4 or 5, which is far too low a level to be coping effectively in an English environment.
- Employers are highly involved, despite being busy in other things.
- There is a need for settlement counselling for students, in addition to the usual career counselling and the other types of support typically provided.
- Multiple assessment tools may be needed to measure engineers' proficiency.
- Pronunciation needs to be recognized as an important issue in language training.
- Projects demonstrate common struggles, including attracting and retaining students and dealing with funding issues.
- Learning is accelerated when instruction is relevant to the workplace.
- Many projects are being delivered across the province.
- The challenges differ from one community to another.
- There was little reference to learners' motivation and attitude.
- The challenges related to finding and retaining instructors also extends to preparing and training instructors in the delivery of occupational skills.
- Feed, acknowledge, invite and involve employers.
- It's a two-way street. Immigrants need to learn the Canadian work culture and successful employers, like Colt Engineering and others, are training their staff about inclusion and diversity.
- Immigrants don't come here just looking for a job. They are hoping to help their families. So programs need to offer holistic support – such as helping spouses find work – and provide welcoming environments to immigrants and their families.

Key Learnings

- Invite HR managers to potluck lunches with learners in the pilot.
- Putting students in a workplace increases their learning.
- Make part-time programming available for people working full time.
- Take an holistic approach and look at students' prior learning outside their formal credentials

- Language teaching and training is becoming employer driven, so engaging employers from the beginning of the project can be a key to success.
- Thinking in English is a skill that learners have to develop, and something we need to reinforce as instructors and providers.
- Is there any research related to making the shift from thinking in a native language to thinking in English?
- We need to be flexible to recognize employers' timelines, but the question becomes how to manage that, given our needs to get people through program components.
- Fossilization in pronunciation can be a serious problem.
- The more you involve employers, the more you have to engage with their agenda, and they are not educators. So sometimes a balancing act is required to help them understand the program, but not feel that they should run programs.
- Employment and placement is a key area that everyone has expectations about. We have lots of questions about it, including the value of volunteer work placements versus other kinds or models. We need to look at ways to help people move into employment that doesn't involve only a volunteer work placement, because volunteer placements are very time consuming and sometimes of questionable benefit.
- When we talk about counselling, I think we're trying to find a solution to the despair and discouragement that people have when they've been here for a while. I would rather integrate that into the curriculum itself, because too often the despair gets worse if people are fragmented.
- When we talk about enhanced language training, the operative word is *enhanced*, because while language is very important, communication is much more than language. We have to distinguish between language and other communication skills and decide whether that [determination] happens before the program starts or during the program, or both, because the CLB level problem is huge.
- We are becoming aware of the importance of mastering the corporate culture.

Large Group Question and Answer

At the end of the presentations on ESL Occupational Projects in the engineering related and oil and gas sector, all presenters were brought together in a panel to respond to questions from the floor. (Note: Q = question; A = answer; C = comment)

- Q. *What is the reason for dedicating a course to intercultural communication and what are its components?*
- A. We cannot divorce culture and language. One of the components involves getting people to examine their communication style. Students have to be able to distinguish between cultural communication and personality differences. A separate course allows them to focus on culture and gives them the tools to understand the cultural line, when they've crossed it, and how to recover. You can teach language skills extensively, but if students don't understand the culture, there are going to be difficulties.
- Q. *You described the program in Fort McMurray as including participants from a variety of professions, and that this is a bonus. Can you tell us more?*
- A. The classroom represents a tiny sample of the community and cross-cultural communication starts there. The students become each other's networking practice. They invite each other into their homes. One of the events we have organized is "we love the winters here." It has been a huge success. Employers have donated winter gear. People come in to explain why you plug in your car, how to look after your furnace and your skin. We've tried to integrate the students into the college and the community.
- Q. *The sense of community may be easier to build in a smaller centre than a large one like Edmonton or Calgary. If these programs focus on higher language development, the work is about integration, rather than just getting a job. Are there other activities we need to do to increase the sense of community? In a smaller place, employers often have a long-term commitment and a buy-in. I've heard people ask, "Can you just tell me how to talk Canadian to people?"*
- A. It doesn't matter whether you are teaching LINC literacy or Occupational English, best practice says we build community however we can within our classes. We invite people in. We invite in employers, community leaders or volunteers to speak informally with ESL students. Because we are a college, we can connect ESL students to students in some of our other programs. For example, we hold a "planned encounter", where students training as hospital unit clerks meet ESL students in a planned way to discuss differences and similarities. This is helpful for unit clerks too because they are going to encounter people from diverse populations. So, no matter what programming you have, you create community wherever you can, and that's a key component of any language program.
- A. One of the vital ways to build community is through liaising, moving back and forth between the community (including employers) and the program. What is very important is that it's a positive community.

- A. If a sense of hope is alive about learning and living in Canada, then integration happens much faster.
- A. We volunteer at a casino. I had volunteers lined up, but some of them bailed out at the last moment. So I went to my list of students from last year, and five of them offered to help. They identified themselves as part of the small-scale community at CIES (Calgary Immigrant Educational Society). Two students sent their wives. This experience may motivate them to volunteer in their own community.
- A. Some of the assignments we give to students require them to go into the community to talk to people and report back. When we put students into groups, we ensure that they are from a mix of nationalities. One thing we have to realize is that students are sometimes struggling with family issues outside school, so it is important that they know where to get help.
- Q. *Are any of you doing anything to help with job retention once people have finished your program?*
- A. People are employed in the Colt Engineering project. That was one of Colt's goals. We continue to offer training as asked to by the company, working with department heads and supervisors on intercultural integration. On the other side, we work with immigrants to help them understand the Canadian workplace culture, what their options are (promotions, etc.), and how to be a good employee and retain employment. The company is paying for the support, so how long we provide it is up to them. We are working on a sustainability plan with them.
- A. We do a lot of role playing and speaking in class around communication in the workplace, dealing with difficulties with co-workers, etc. Students in our work placement come back to the program every week to talk about things that occur at work and how they handle them. The whole class learns from the discussion.
- A. In Fort McMurray, companies are in competition fighting for employees, so they are always looking for ways to retain them. We maintain the lines of communication with our graduates. For example, we invite former students to graduation ceremonies. They feel very comfortable coming in and speaking to us at any time.
- Q. *Can the Colt model be applied to smaller engineering firms?*
- A. It might be easier in a smaller firm. Financing is a major issue. When I promote the program to companies, I have to catch their interest immediately. I have to be clear about what can and cannot be achieved. You have to get the department heads, managers and as many people within the company as possible to participate in this program. Someone from the program has to go into the company and tell them what we are doing and how they can help – two or three things they can do. Both sides (program and employer) have to work at it.
- A. The key is whether the company has the resources and the willingness. At Colt and its sister company, the HR managers took this program on and wanted it to

- work. They became involved in selling it to their employees, looking at the results and determining the next steps.
- Q. *I expect the work culture might have something to do with it and being located in an urban area versus a rural one.*
- A. [As a service provider] you need to understand the culture within an organization. If it is a company that promotes assimilation, the program is going to fail. Sometimes the chances of success are better in a rural location because of the role of community.
- C. *What I hear you talking about are best practices. We need to apply the learning beyond the company. Thank you for making that clear.*
- Q. *How do you recruit people into a program, and what criteria did you use to accept or reject people?*
- A. A lot of people learn about us through word of mouth. If we get people who are not going to be accepted, we refer them to other programs and resources.
- A. Keyano College advertises in the community and through the newspaper. We approach employers that have recruited overseas to ask if the spouses of the new recruits are employed. Our graduates are now asking that their families and friends be accepted, but the program is restricted to people with permanent residence status. Also, we do not always have enough resources or instructors to deliver additional classes.
- A. It is fairly easy to find people for our programs in Calgary, and we have not had any problems filling the spaces. Our problem is what to do with the ones who don't get into the program.
- A. We advertised in the Chinese newspaper. We had someone walk in with a Level 4 or 5, who we had to turn down. I suggest that people who can't get in enroll in English conversation classes or clubs, which are offered by libraries, and come back to us next year.
- A. A lot of people from other countries are defined as engineers, but they're not. But they know what the word means, so you can attract them by using that term. In Edmonton, an advertisement in the Examiner is a good way to reach people. We should share recruitment with other service providers too.
- Q. *Is there a capacity issue? How can that be addressed?*
- A. Each organization is dealing with a capacity issue. With regard to teachers, the U of A is graduating a number of TESL teachers and they are looking for work, so we can assist them in gaining experience. There is no shortage in Edmonton and Calgary, but in the rural areas and small communities, it is very challenging to find qualified teachers to provide programming to immigrants.

- A. In Calgary, this year for the first time we did not spend all of our ESL dollars. Mount Royal College did not fill all of its seats. So, something has changed in the labour market. The unemployment rate is under 3%.
- A. We are looking at alternative delivery models, moving away from face to face.
- A. Capacity also refers to the number of students a teacher can handle. Ideally it's 15. Economically, it may be 18 to 20. It can't be 25. That will not work. Maybe there needs to be special professional development money through a program like this, instead of the cost coming out of a college's budget.
- A. I was interviewing teachers and as soon as they heard that there is no curriculum guideline, they were no longer interested. When you have to teach and create curriculum resources, it can be exhausting.
- C. *Teachers are often on contract so the dates are very important. If funding doesn't come through, a program cannot advertise, so they don't get enough students. It is important to recognize that the funding approval, program start up, and recruitment all have to fit together.*
- C. *We don't have industry represented here today. We are informing each other of our programs, but for the most part, industry is completely unaware of them. Would there be interest in holding a travelling job fair/orientation for employers to meet with organizations to find out about employment ready graduates? When we brought this idea up to our advisory committee, Syncrude was interested, Suncor was interested, Albion was interested.*
- Q. *What would be the advantage of that?*
- A. Syncrude receives several thousand applications a month from job seekers. They do not have the infrastructure to read through those. Suncor travels to other countries to hire engineers. Those people come with spouses who may want to go through your programs, but the companies are not aware that your programs exist. And they are not aware that many colleges are preparing individuals for work who are already here.

Break Out Session

Participants moved into three pre-selected groups to discuss the following questions:

How do you as providers view the occupational model of ESL delivery?

How do your learners view the occupational model of ESL delivery?

How does the community view the occupational model of ESL delivery?

The observations of the three groups (1, 2, 3) are on the following pages.

Providers' view of the occupational model

Group #1

- Involves a continuum of learning from CLB 4- 6 to CLB 7- 10
- General versus Specific
- Benchmarks 2 - 3? Temporary workers?

Group #2

- The focus is on outcomes, strategies for social integration, how to live and work in Canada.
- Connection between classroom and workplace
- ESL is a more recent component
- TIME: focusing on occupation specific for students
- Workplace culture and larger culture (context: cultural communication and awareness essential)
- Nature of delivery (general, specific)
- ELT: a higher level to function in workplace versus LINC
- Need for strategies for ongoing language training if employed
- Getting employers on board
- Economy has changed
- The immigrant has changed and is looking for a fast track into employment.
- Model includes retraining
- The model may not apply to other skilled immigrants (who are not engineers or healthcare workers).

Group #3

- Work experience component can be integrated into program earlier to alleviate student identity.
- Earlier identification to the workplace is important to develop relationships and obtain buy-in by students and employers.

- Some employers are now identifying themselves as International Engineering Graduate (IEG) friendly workplaces.
- The higher demand for professionals has changed our programming.
- ELT model needs to remain flexible to meet market needs, as well as students' needs.
- There are various models:
 - English in the workplace
 - Paid practicum with signed contracts of commitment
 - Fort McMurray model – specific skills for specific jobs
 - Highly skilled immigrant professionals with additional support in the workplace

Strengths

- Model addresses the needs of students in our classes.
- Our programs successfully provide specific language/communication assistance to specific professionals/disciplines.

Issues

- A whole group of IEGs is not accessing our programs, but going to other programs to be re-educated in a different field.
- Need career counselling for our students that is objective and informed, but challenging.
- Misinformation is circulating through word of mouth.
- There are administrative challenges in dealing with two funders, two contractors, etc.
- Programs can lose key staff when there are time lapses between contracts.
- Retaining staff for two years will be a possibility and hope for us.

Learners' view of the occupational model

Group #1

- Communicate the value of CLBs to employers, regulatory bodies and educational institutions
- Sequential model versus integrated model
- Educate industry about concerns regarding immigrants and employment and government support. They have questions. What is language training? Why is it important? What is assessment? We need a message for industry.
- Why are employers recruiting temporary workers overseas when there are immigrants who are already here?

Group #2

- Opportunity for retraining if they can access dollars and have the time and qualifications
- More hope
- Need for individualization: action plans
- Supporting each other
- Stigma of ESL
- Maybe a step down: looking higher to same occupation
- Wait time/intake time/being able to work
- Funding issues: council to quit
- Employed workers may not have access to programming or funding or the motivation to improve their language skills.
- Part-time and gender and family issues

Community's view of the occupational model

Group #1

- Employers are looking for solutions.

Essential skills
Life skills – soft skills
Workplace culture
Diversity training

Group #2

- Involving community, not just instructors as a connection
- Not to disconnect from settlement issues
- Marketing community abroad
- Stigma attached to ESL (marketing and phrasing)
- Students are perceived as less than qualified, but their expectations are high.
- Service providers are keen to make connections.

- Integrating versus classroom only
- Progress in how community responds to immigrants in the workplace. Community attitudes are shifting.
- Need enlightened employers to help lead the way
- Need to reward employers who make inroads (RISE awards, incentives)

2005 – 2015 Occupational Outlook

Dr. Ali Abdelrahman, Senior Economist with the Data Development and Analysis Branch of Alberta Human Resources and Employment presented the department's "Occupational Outlook 2005 to 2015". The PowerPoint presentation is provided.

Wednesday – March 15th

Overview of the Day

Jim Klinge opened the second day's session by reviewing the results of participants' evaluation of the first day (see end of report) and he introduced the next presenters.

Editor's Note: Conference presentations were compiled in documents accompanying this conference summary based on the format in which they were prepared: presentation templates or Power Point presentations

ESL Occupational Projects In Health Related Sectors

The first presentations were on ESL Occupational Projects underway in health related sectors. The list of presenters is provided below. The asterisked presentations are located at the end of this report. The others are provided in PowerPoint format.

Project Name: ***Language and Practice Enhancement for Internationally Trained Counselors****
 Organization: Bow Valley College, Calgary
 Presenter(s): Mrs. Isabel Gibbins igibbins@bowvalleycollege.ca

Project Name: ***International Pharmacy Bridging Program***
 Organization: Bredin Institute, Edmonton
 Presenter(s): Mrs. Georgina Fairbank gfairbank@bredin.ab.ca

Project Name: ***International Pharmacy Graduate Preceptor Support Manual***
 Organization: Bredin Institute, Edmonton
 Presenter(s): Mrs. Georgina Fairbank gfairbank@bredin.ab.ca

Project Name: ***Practical Nurse Fast Track Program for Internationally Educated Nursing Professionals***
 Organization: NorQuest College, Edmonton
 Presenter(s): Ms. Denise DeLong Denise.Delong@norquest.ca
 Ms. Cynthia Lambertson-Poon
 Cynthia.lambertsonpoon@norquest.ca

Large Group Question and Answer

As before, at the end of the presentations, all presenters on projects in the health-related sectors were brought together to respond to questions from the floor. (Note: Q = question; A = answer; C = comment)

- Q. *Did you have a content instructor in the pharmacy program in addition to the ESL instructor?*
- A. Yes. We couldn't have done it without a licensed pharmacist on staff.

Q. *How did the team teaching go?*

A. Part of the curriculum involved integration where the ESL and the pharmacist worked together. They also conducted classes on their own.

- C. *With the diversity of the backgrounds of students, and the size of the classes, team teaching and one-on-one is something we should be looking at in future.*
- A. Team teaching is a very vital, but exhausting process. It took a lot of effort on the part of the ESL and content instructors to determine what approach to take. It needs a lot of preliminary work.
- C. *It's a lot trickier than just putting two people together in a situation. A lot depends on personality.*
- C. *The amount of time it takes to get the ESL and the content area together in an organization is protracted and probably needs to be fed on an ongoing basis.*
- C. *The content people also need to develop respect for what the ESL people can do.*
- C. *Students seem inclined to have more respect for or listen more to the content people, so we need to show that what they are going to learn from us will be valuable. The language-communication people can be subsumed by the content people, so it's important to work out a balance through negotiation and discussion.*
- C. *It's also important to choose activities that work in team teaching, not just pushing two people together.*
- Q. *How long was the cultural adaptation part of the pharmacy bridging program?*
- A. The cultural piece is extremely important and I started out with what I call cultural capital, so that the students can relate to people talking about typical Canadian things, like hockey, for example. Then we went on to workplace culture – for example, what authority is and how you get authority. This is woven into the whole program. Healthcare students need two languages: medical language to speak to doctors and other healthcare professionals and lay language to speak to patients.
- Q. *If you had to axe a piece out of the cultural adaptation, what are the most significant things you would keep?*
- A. The diversity piece is extremely important, knowing how to talk to people of different generations, knowing that issues of gender differ in different countries. The second is organizational culture: what is the culture of pharmacy and what is the culture of the particular workplace the student is in, because those vary.
- Q. *Have you identified any cross-trained individuals, for example a background in healthcare technology as well as ESL training?*
- A. We had doctors applying for Practical Nurse Program, but the licensing body said a fast track program was not appropriate for them because they hadn't worked as nurses. We also had nurses that were midwives. Those with a strong nursing background were accepted, but others would have had to make up too many of

the required courses. We believe there is a need for a similar program for midwives.

Q. *I was thinking more of facilitators or instructors with cross-training.*

A. I am not a nurse, but was helped by having worked in a hospital as a ward aide and as an educator in the hospital system. So I know the culture.

A. One of our facilitators had medical training from Europe and a background in many of the areas the nurses are working in. Cynthia worked on the Grant MacEwan nursing program.

Q. *On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being very important, where would you put pronunciation? And what is the best strategy you had for bringing clarity to people's accents?*

A. Bow Valley College – I'd put it as a 10. One of the reasons people weren't going back to the counsellors was that they were unable to understand what they were being told.

Bredin College – a number 10. If a pharmacist can't speak clearly to a patient, how can they effectively counsel them? It's a huge issue and could have drastic consequences.

Bredin College – It's extremely important. People are losing the jobs they've worked in for a long time because of pronunciation. Sometimes students didn't understand how important it is until they went to their practicum and the pharmacist got complaints about their English. It's important to raise people's awareness as to why they are not being understood. Those people who are most difficult to teach are often the ones with a different dialect who think their English is fine because it was acceptable where they came from.

NorQuest College. When we first started the program, pronunciation wasn't a priority. However, we had 18 students with 12 different language backgrounds and when they started talking, we realized we had to do something more focused. So we started making them more aware of their own language by videotaping them during role-play and focusing specifically on pronunciation.

A. Something we're looking at for the pharmacy program is the Calgary-Cambridge model being used in the UK with physicians and surgeons. The pharmacists are now bringing it to Canada. It uses videotaping and creates a peer support where people interact with "real life" patients and get feedback on a specific issue. So, it encourages learning in a safe environment.

Q. *How important was employer involvement in the success of the program?*

A. Bredin Institute – It was very important because the students needed 500 hours of internship, so we began building relationships with employers before the program even commenced.

Bow Valley College – It was important to us as well, and we would have benefited from a broader base of employer input.

NorQuest College – The demand for LPNs is such that students often are plucked out of the program right away. We have a responsibility to follow up with employers and to make sure they are performing on the job. We will be involving employers in our external advisory committee to ensure that.

Bredin Institute – We had to target employers, and couldn't involve just any one because the program is counselling based. Hospital pharmacy isn't counselling based, so we prefer students to go into the community where they can practice patient counselling.

ESL Occupational Projects Underway in Manitoba

The next speaker was Margaret Pidlaski, Director of Adult Language Training with Manitoba Labour and Immigration.

After thanking the conference organizers and saying how much she was learning, Margaret began by explaining that the environment in Manitoba is different from Alberta's. It is smaller, with fewer service providers, but the challenges are similar. The same needs are being identified.

Margaret described the qualifications and recognition or QR initiative in Manitoba, and that the term "qualification" was chosen deliberately over "credentials". A lot of programs across the country focus on helping immigrants to navigate the system of qualifications. Manitoba is taking a somewhat different approach, by looking at how the system can be modified to make it easier to navigate by the immigrant. The initiative is working with regulatory bodies, universities, and other organizations to examine the system and see whether it has to change. It is a complicated issue, but some measurable steps have been achieved. There has been buy-in from the different parties and agreement on some of the standards of assessment or equitable practices.

Margaret then went on to describe some of the ESL projects in Manitoba. Manitoba uses the term, EAL, English as an Additional Language, because ESL has a negative connotation in some circles.

There are two ELT programs for engineers in Manitoba. The Internationally Educated Engineers Qualification (IEEQ) program is a one-year co op placement program delivered by the University of Manitoba to assist internationally trained engineers in meeting licensure requirements in Manitoba. The English for Engineers (EEP) program is a part time language focused program for internationally trained engineers at CLB 7/8 who are reestablishing their careers in Manitoba, that is, they may be employed, working towards licensure, or preparing for further academic studies. The EEP program has two delivery modes (online and in class).

Manitoba ALT also offers a teachers program for internationally educated teachers. Margaret's branch discovered that these people were working, although not necessarily in their profession, and couldn't afford to attend ESL classes full-time. So the program is now offered part-time, two evenings a week and Saturday. There is also a web-based component to this, similar to the model for engineers, with connection to an on-line tutor.

The third program is the Early Childhood Educators. Many players came together to work on this, and the decision was made to assess competencies on the job, which Margaret described as an exciting alternative to the assessment process used by the licensing body. The educators are observed doing their job, and assessed. If gaps are found, they are required to take training. The five participants registered last year have all been certified.

Canadian Communications for Physicians Trained Abroad is another program. It involves 300 hours taken at Red River College. The curriculum has just been produced and should be available soon. It focuses on terminology and systems knowledge. Credibility was an issue at the beginning because the instructor was not a doctor and the students felt a doctor was needed. This need was addressed by bringing in doctors as guest speakers. One of the purposes is to train people to be successful at the CAPE (Clinical Assessment) exam. Everyone who has completed the communications program has been successful at CAPE. Then they take one year of enhanced training.

The province also offers programs for accountants and hairdressers. There is a course for credit union workers, initiated by credit unions that were planning to hire new employees and wanted diverse staff with backgrounds in banking and finance. The credit unions ran a three-day orientation and provided three month paid work placements. Most of the people who come into the course end up staying where they were placed.

There is a generic English Skills Program for professionals at CLB 5 and 6. Students learn strategies to help correct pronunciation, understand fast Canadian speech, and understand and prepare for examinations. They also receive individual attention at a reading and writing centre.

This coming year the province is offering a program called Canadian Communications for Allied Health Professionals. Another one is similar to the Colt Engineering program. Two research projects that are on the go include an e-learning system to teach English to reach people in remote areas, and the other involves employers in the retail sector. This project is trying to determine how employers are choosing language levels when they hire new immigrants and how are they assessing those levels.

One challenge not yet mentioned in the conference is co-ordination. Several funders have put money into qualifications and recognition, but Margaret wants to see funds co-ordinated and used in the most responsible way. She made a plea for an enduring federal role, explaining that CIC had been visionary in giving Canada the CLB standard, but devolving ELT to the regions may increase fragmentation in the assessment of CLB. She sees a need for a national co-ordination role for the assessment framework, so that everyone across the country has a common language.

More information about Manitoba's programs is available at:
www.gov.mb.ca/labour/immigrate/learningenglish

In closing, Margaret invited everyone to the TESL Canada Conference to be held in October 2007. The day before the conference is a symposium, where sessions will be on portfolio development and enhanced language training. There will be educational visits that day as well. She then took questions from the floor.

Q. *What is the one-year enhancement program for physicians?*

A. That is a program developed for International Medical Graduates (IMG) by Manitoba Health. It is a type of internship where participants have a supervisor to see them through each stage of the training. More information is available on the website of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba.
www.gov.mb.ca/health/mlpimg/index.html

C. *The province of Manitoba should be congratulated because every level of government for the last several years has recognized the need to do something about qualification recognition, but no one wanted to be the leader. So the province of Manitoba said, we're going to make it our responsibility.*

Q. *Are the programs concentrated in small places or are they widespread?*

A. It's hard to get a critical mass of professionals in one discipline. Last year we had three occupational therapists arrive in Manitoba, and it would have been difficult to put on a program for them because they are at different stages in the recognition process. Most of the programming is centred in Winnipeg.

Q. *You mentioned Red River College. Who are the other providers working in this field?*

A. University of Winnipeg for the teachers. The licensing body is taking responsibility for the Early Childhood Educators. Red River College delivers the doctors' program, and accountants go through the Certified General Accountants of Manitoba. The credit union runs its program. Transition Centre is a not for profit organization offering specialized English skills programming. A private deliverer involved in the engineering program is Katherine Clark Associates who is housed at Success Skills.

Q. *Has the issue of professional development for Occupational ELT instructors come up?*

A. That's a very important issue. You can be a great ESL teacher but not know ELT, so we have to build that capacity in the field. We've done a couple of things. Last year we offered a session on CLB training and we are planning a session this month on benchmarking occupations. We need experts to help HR people in the hiring process, but we also need them in the classrooms, so we are looking at offering more professional development. It's a question of finding the funds and finding qualified people to present workshops or act as mentors. We also want to work with TESL training bodies.

A new process called Occupation Language Analysis combines benchmarks with essential skills. Benchmarking involves observing someone on the job and

determining what language level they have to be at in order to be safe and effective. There is a report on our website: www.immigratemanitoba.com

Q. *With regard to the Early Childhood Educators, are they going into day cares or kindergartens? Are they coming in at a level 1 and then having their competencies assessed?*

A. I don't know all of the details. It's my understanding that they could be brand new arrivals. So the licensing body is taking a chance by putting them in the field and then assessing their abilities.

Q. *Where are the people in the teachers program working?*

A. Some of them are teaching assistants. Some are working at Safeway or in a similar job. They are not always in a school environment.

Presentations on ESL Occupational Projects

The presentations continued, with these last ones being on ESL Occupational projects in other sectors.

Project Name: ***E-Learning Bridging Program***
 Organization: Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, Edmonton
 Presenter(s): Ms. Laurie Hauer lhauer@emcn.ab.ca
 Mrs. Karen Berg kberg@emcn.ab.ca
 Mr. Karol Adamowicz kadamowicz@emcn.ab.ca

Project Name: ***Developing Integrated Programming for Immigrant Professionals***
 Organization: Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, Edmonton
 Presenter(s): Mr. Karol Adamowicz kadamowicz@emcn.ab.ca

Project Name: ***The Skills Connect Model: Language and Culture Upgrading for Internationally Trained Professionals***
 Organization: SAIT Polytechnic, Calgary
 Presenter(s): Ms. Kathleen Hall kathleen.hall@sait.com

Project Name: ***Today's Opportunities. Tomorrow's Promise****
 Organization: Society of Brooks Community Adult Learning Council, Brooks
 Presenter(s): Mrs. Pat White

Project Name: ***Business Communications for Professionals***
 Organization: Calgary Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, Calgary
 Presenter(s): Ms. Heather Klassen hklassen@cmcn.ab.ca

Large Group Question and Answer

- Q. *How do you assess students' progress in the e-learning program?*
- A. We are not quite at that stage yet, but we have a number of assignments and tests that we can use to assess progress. Other ways include conferencing and telephone discussion. We plan to have each student come in for a one-day workshop because of the importance of seeing someone in person.
- Q. *How are professionals ending up in Brooks? Why would they come to a meat packing plant with the skill sets they have?*
- A. They don't land in Brooks. We are a secondary stop for them. They have already been in a larger city where they can get a job for a minimum wage, but cannot support a family on that. They hear that there is work in Brooks paying \$18 an hour, so they come.
- Q. *How long is the SAIT program?*
- A. We started on February 8th, and students graduated in June, having completed a one-month practicum. The program was offered all day Saturday and one night a week. All the students worked full time.
- Q. *My question is for the Calgary Mennonite Centre. You referred to attitude in the interview process. What are the things you would consider a red flag? And how do you address attitude in the classroom?*
- A. We ask specific questions in the interview about experience with conflict. We try to ask situational questions, such as how have you dealt with a situation at work that was stressful. You can identify interpersonal skills in an interview. For example, some people interrupt a lot or offer advice about how to run our program. In program delivery, we set up situations with the potential for conflict, and then observe where the issues arise. We use an inductive approach in our teaching style. One example: we assign a student to act as a client and mediate a conflict while the others observe (peer observation). Then they discuss how it could have been handled better. We use specific activities and other methods to try to increase students' flexibility.
- Q. *With regard to the e-learning project of the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, has there been any evaluation of your assessment tool?*
- A. The self-assessment tool on-line is completed by the IEP, but it is not validated by anyone. If the IEP is interested in any of our programs, the tool is taken to the next stage, where an assessor will review the responses and compare them to the student's transcript of marks and detailed resume. For stage three, if any area has been flagged as a discrepancy between the assessor's observations and the IEP's response, it is taken to an interview committee. In the interview, the panel will ask the IEP questions to give him or her a chance to explain or to identify an error of some kind.

- Q. *With regard to the SAIT program, did students leave their job to do the practicum?*
- A. No. Some of them made arrangements with their employer to take time off. Some did it during the summer holidays. In other cases, we tried to arrange it during evenings or weekends.

Break Out Session

Participants were asked to break into three groups again to discuss the following three questions. (The questions originally in the agenda were revised.)

1. How can we effectively and efficiently support the sharing of information about what works/does not work about our projects?
2. Are we achieving the outcomes of the program model and are these the best outcomes for the immigrant group being served (i.e., skilled professionals with high end Stage 2 intermediate ESL capacities)?
3. What themes are emerging from the insights that should inform delivery and inform the call for proposals process.

Plenary Session Feedback

Each of the three groups presented their responses to the larger group.

1. *How can we effectively and efficiently support the sharing of information?*

Group #1

- Via e-mails using an updated e-mail list
- Subscribe to an Internet discussion board and chatroom
- Hold more conferences like this one. Work with ATESL to do this.
- Provide information on key persons (managers, instructors), including who is doing what and how
- Create a template for information sharing
- Publish a quarterly newsletter
- Post information on websites, and create links between sites
- The provincial and federal governments commit to remaining involved and call for collaboration from all regions and employers and co-ordination of all agencies doing

ELT. (For example, so that all agencies are not trying to recruit the same employers at the same time.)

Group #2

- Add a chatroom and/or forums for designated discussions with specific dates and times to meet up. Create specific formats or frameworks to keep discussion on track.
- Create an information fair for service providers, instructors, employers and students with the purpose of exchanging information at a variety of levels.
- Set up a teleconference group and provide information beforehand so that the time is used wisely and effectively. Create themes for the conferences.
- Don't let today end. Let's keep in touch and meet once or twice a year to follow up and learn more. Next time,
 - invite more rural groups to participate
 - invite other groups or service providers who may not yet be offering a program but are considering doing so
- A National Conference for ELT is being planned for November 2006 and a document on lessons learned will be sent out.

Group #3

- Develop "how to" documents and make them available to everyone
- Provide a final report or executive summary of what works in each of the projects, and make that available in a national database, accessible by keyword
- Link with the provincial conferences such as those held by TESL Canada
- Set up an electronic depository/dbase listing projects, contacts and tools

2. *Are we achieving the outcomes of the program model and are these the best?*

Group #1

- Change the system to fit participants' needs.
- The results are good in a limited way. The programs met the success rate and showed positive consequences.
- Research is needed in the future to extend programming to include mentoring and to create economies of scale so that more people can go through programs.
- Evaluate the successes.

- Allow longer follow-up time. Can we push follow up from 180 to 365 days and see what kind of results we get?
- Ensure continuity and expand based on current successes.
- Retain flexibility in the model and the emphasis of partnerships. Continue to allow for differences, regionally, in the market and by client group.

Group #2

- The model we are using is sufficiently flexible to support a variety of outcomes and encourage the success of those we work with. Success needs to be measured by different elements and not just whether someone found employment or not.

Group #3

- Yes. The ELT model meets the needs of the labour market destined, but we may need ESL at a different level to meet the needs of the labour market at a later stage.
- We need to work with system changes.
- Meet the need for higher level ESL , but not necessarily where it meets the work-ready outcome.
- When people can't afford to take a program, we need flexible ways to accommodate them (counsel to leave, counsel to reduce hours).
- CIC can discuss the co-ordination of funding with other member associations and departments.
- Improve the timeliness of funding decisions.

3. *What themes are emerging from the insights?*

Group #1

- The need for professional development and stability
- Build groundwork/ELT programs
- The need for counselling in a wider context, beyond career or employment counselling
- Extend support/follow-up from 6 months to a year for better job retention. Contact should be more frequent, so that if a problem arises the student or employer has someone to talk to.
- Employment support practice

- Expand the HRSDC anti-racism program and make it more available.

Group #2

- Window of opportunity to engage employers. They need information on what they can do to make it easier for newcomers in the workplace.
- Need for a holistic approach that includes things like counselling on non-work related issues
- The need to professionally develop instructors that goes beyond on-the-job training. Right now, instructors are hired on contract and put into the classroom. This must be built into jobs/funding
- The need for occupation specific ESL teachers
- The impacts are:
 - The continuity of our programs
 - Quality and consistency of programming
 - Credibility

Group #3

- There is a need for capacity building related to teacher support and program support, including teacher preparation programs.
- Support for the family needs to be ongoing through the program, not only financial support but help for a participant's family members.
- Impact of ELT on the ESL classroom and college environments. What can we learn from ELT that can be applied at the lower levels?
- Motivation and helping students with goal setting
- How can we include dealing with despair? This is integral to the ELT program.
- Teacher preparedness helps teachers to adapt and be responsive to learners' circumstances.
- The challenge of working with professionals.
- When is it best to teach the language component?
- Communicate the capacity of technology to assist with delivery. Find ways to help teachers keep their skills up to date. Often students are more knowledgeable about technology than the teachers.
- Digital Divide. Finding expertise to address the fact that sometimes smaller agencies do not have the same resources as larger ones, including technology.

- Working with employers to ensure a relationship between the program and the advisory committee
- Information and marketing. How do we get our messages out to the community?
- Pronunciation – when and how to teach
- Two-way street. The challenge of informing Canadian employers and workers as well as our students. We are change agents.
- Measuring success is also a two-way street. How do we know that we are meeting employers' and business needs? Employers need to know what's in it for them.
- Workplace culture – when and how to teach
- Adapting curriculum to meet employer needs
- Kirkpatrick's evaluation model – looking at learners and all the players who have an impact on them
- Qualifications and recognition
- Team teaching
- Benchmarking occupations

Closing Comments

In closing the conference, Carolyn Dieleman and Rocky Gushuliak said how much they had learned and thanked everyone for their participation. Carolyn indicated that the summary would be distributed by HRE by the end of April 2006.

The conference concluded at 4:00 PM