

# The ATESL Newsletter

*The Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language (ATESL) is a professional organization which promotes the highest standards of teaching and English language program provision for all learners in Alberta whose first language is other than English.*

January - February 2004

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## TESL Celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

My term as President of ATESL coincides with a very important milestone in the development of the ESL profession in Alberta, and I look forward to celebrating that milestone in the coming months.

It was 25 years ago, on February 3, 1979, that a group of committed ESL teachers filed an application under the Societies Act of Alberta, to form the **Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language (ATESL)**. There were five signatures on the application:

- Laura E. Ho
- Barbara Duffus
- Dawn L. Seabrook
- Alexandria Sawchuk
- Wendy M. Uncles

Their vision for ATESL was very clearly articulated in the objects of the society:

- To encourage communication amongst teachers of English as a Second Language in the province of Alberta.*
- To represent and express the professional concerns of those vocationally committed to ESL (English as a Second Language) in Alberta.*
- To promote a professional development amongst teachers of ESL in Alberta.*
- To provide a professional journal for teachers of ESL in Alberta.*
- To be a source of professional assistance for those teaching ESL in Alberta.*
- To participate, with other provincial ESL Associations, in professional development at the national level.*
- To develop and maintain an extensive bibliography of books and materials related to ESL teaching.*

This vision has shaped the development of ATESL and its work on behalf of its members for the last 25 years. Technology has changed how we do some things, but the focus on communication and professional development has remained at the centre of ATESL's work.

In the coming months of 2004 we plan to take some time to celebrate the accomplishments of these first 25 years, to thank the people who have contributed so much, and to confirm our association's goals for the future. We have an opportunity to do that in various ways, through our website and at our annual conference as well as in our regular meetings of the Edmonton and Calgary locals. If you have any material you would like to share - photos, documents, stories, memories - get in touch with members of the Provincial Executive or your local committees.

## ATESL Mission Statement

*The Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language (ATESL) is a professional organization which promotes the highest standards of teaching and English language program provision for all learners in Alberta whose first language is other than English.*

### We do this by:

- encouraging and providing professional development opportunities which are consistent with generally accepted principles of adult learning and with currently understood principles of second language learning and teaching
- liaising with other organizations, local, provincial, national and international, which are engaged in education
- communicating with government, business, and the general public to create awareness about immigration, settlement of immigrants and English language learning
- communicating with English language program providers and learners to encourage awareness of issues of accountability and program standards
- administering an ESL teacher accreditation process which encourages the highest standards of teacher preparation and performance
- working collaboratively with governments to develop policies and procedures which govern the provision of English language programs and related services for immigrants to Canada
- encouraging and supporting the participation of learners in the decision-making process which determine their educational choices

**ATESL**

**[www.atesl.ca](http://www.atesl.ca)**

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## 2004 ATESL Provincial Conference

### Chairpersons' Report

The first two major tasks to prepare for the 2004 Conference have been completed. The Organizing Committee is now in place and the venue and date chosen.

The Committee members are Co-Chairpersons, Lorna Allen and Mary Calder (U of A); Program, Marian Rossiter (U of A); Facilities, Linda Busch (U of A); Treasurer, Barb Penner (NorQuest College); Hospitality, Penny Deonarain (U of A); Registrar, Peter Myhre (Grant MacEwan College); Publicity, Amy Meckelborg (U of A), and Publishers' Display, Sara Suddaby (NorQuest College).

Thanks to the hard work of Linda Busch--who contacted most of the conference venues in the city of Edmonton--the ATESL Conference will be held at the Coast Terrace Inn, Gateway Boulevard, South Edmonton on October 22, 23.

We are looking forward to working together to plan the Conference which will celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ATESL. Please mark your calendars now.

**Mark  
Your  
Calendar**



## **TESL Canada Board Meeting (Wednesday November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2003)**

A discussion around a need for restructuring of the Board took place. The board agreed to set up a committee of the whole (meaning all board members) to look at the reorganization of the board structure based on different portfolio and mandates. This committee will be chaired by the Vice President, Shailja Verma. The Vice Chair will be Jennifer St. John, member at large from Ottawa. It was also moved that the structure be revisited at the next face to face meeting on November 18-20, 2004 in Toronto, Ontario.

TESL Canada Website is being overhauled.

The Code of Ethics/Code of Conduct committee chaired by Shaheen Murji met on Friday, November 14<sup>th</sup>. The committee is made up of Joyce Vandall (Scenes), Jennifer Pearson Terell (BC), and members at large: Bill McMichael, Jennifer St. John, Debby Yeager-Woodhouse, and Angela Schinas.

The committee felt that ATESL has done good work in this area.

With the permission of the ATESL Board, the ATESL Board of Director's Code of Conduct (Working Document) and ATESL Code of Ethics documents will be used as a jumping point to come up with a code of ethics for TESL Canada. Other documents which may be used as a resource include codes/practice guidelines used by school boards and the colleges.

It was agreed that the code would be prescriptive not descriptive.

The ATESL Board has agreed to let B.C. Teal use the ATESL Code of Ethics document to assist them in coming up with a Code for their organization.

The Canadian Educational Foundation (TCEF) is the fundraising arm of TESL Canada. Initially all members of the TESL Canada Board were appointed to the Board of Directors for the TESL Canadian Educational Foundation. However, it was moved that the TCEF board be reduced to three members with the Secretary of TESL Canada chairing the board. The following members were appointed to the TCEF Board : Joyce Vandall (SCENES) and Shaheen Murji (ATESL).

The National TESL Canada Standards Committee acknowledged that there were some problems when it came to certification of Teacher Training Programs. Members were concerned that some institutes were getting certified by following the letter of the standards and by doing bare minimum. The Standards Committee is going to look into it and is looking for feedback from other board members.

A representative from China National Foreign Experts Administration Bureau has approached TESL Canada regarding the possibility of importing TESL Canada training courses and evaluation standards into China.

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## **Reporting on the AGM (November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2003)**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30

The following officers were elected on the Board of Directors:

President	Virginia Christopher
Past President	Maureen Sargent
Vice-President	Shailja Verma
Treasurer	Jennifer Pearson Terell
Secretary	Christine Bertram
Members at Large	Jacquelyne Lord
	Angela Schinas
	Jennifer St. John
	Debbie Yeager-Woodhouse

The financial Report and appointment of the auditor were approved.

Virginia Sauvé, Virginia Christopher, and Esther Podoliak were recognized as TESL Canada 2003 life Members.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 am.

Reports by Shaheen Murji

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# Meet the ATESL Board

President -	<b>FREDRICKSON, JAYE</b>
Past President -	<b>MACMINN, MARIA</b>
President Elect -	<b>SZLAMP-FRYGA, TERESE</b>
Secretary -	<b>RHODES, SHERI</b>
Treasurer -	<b>HOLMES, PAUL</b>
TESL Canada Rep -	<b>MURJI, SHAHEEN</b>
Calgary Co-Chair -	<b>DUDLEY, LESLEY</b>
Calgary Co-Chair -	<b>BENJAMIN, GLAIDE</b>
Edmonton Co-Chair -	<b>MYHRE, PETER</b>
Edmonton Co-Chair -	<b>ROSSITER, MARIA</b>
Accreditation Board -	<b>DE LUCA, ANNA</b>
Accreditation Board -	<b>HOLMES, TARA</b>
Accreditation Board -	<b>KINGWELL, GAIL</b>
Conference Co-Chair -	<b>ALLEN, LORNA</b>
Conference Co-Chair -	<b>CALDER, MARY</b>
Administrative Assist.-	<b>SUNDAL, IVAN</b>

**President:** [president@atesl.ca](mailto:president@atesl.ca)

**Calgary Local:** [calgary@atesl.ca](mailto:calgary@atesl.ca)

**Edmonton Local:** [edmonton@atesl.ca](mailto:edmonton@atesl.ca)

**Accreditation:** [accreditation@atesl.ca](mailto:accreditation@atesl.ca)

**Conference:** [conference@atesl.ca](mailto:conference@atesl.ca)

**General information:** [info@atesl.ca](mailto:info@atesl.ca)

## Lesley Dudley

Lesley Dudley has a diverse background in ESL. Her ten years of experience in second language education as a teacher, curriculum developer and evaluator has led her to classrooms throughout Canada and Japan.

In 1992 Lesley graduated with a degree in Elementary Education. Her goal at the time was to teach Grade 3; however a teaching position in Japan soon changed that idea! From 1992-1995, Lesley instructed high school students in Nagano, Japan where she thrived in the 'organized chaos'. Upon her return to Canada, Lesley focussed her energies on teaching second language students. For the next few years she taught international students enrolled in Canadian high school ESL programs, newcomers to Canada and even Japanese language courses. She even managed to return to Japan in 1999 to teach adults on the beautiful island of Okinawa.

After returning from Japan in 2000, Lesley pursued a Masters of Education in the TESL Program at the University of Alberta. She completed her degree in 2003 and is currently working at Bow

Valley College in Calgary. At this time, Lesley is serving as the co-chair for the Calgary ATESL local organization. She recently presented her research at the 2003 ATESL Provincial conference.

In her free time she enjoys hiking, skiing and being outdoors. Her newest adventure is the daily commute to Calgary from her cabin!

## Anna De Luca

Anna De Luca has over 20 years of experience in teaching ESL/EFL, including 4 years in intensive English programs in China. She has been involved in formal and informal teacher training as well as curriculum and materials development for 15 years. She has supervised the TESL practicum at the U of A. She is currently the coordinator of Language Training at NorQuest College.

## Glaide Benjamin

Presently residing in Calgary, originally from Edmonton where she obtained an Honours Degree in English Literature, enjoyed several years in Toronto where she was in Advertising/Marketing for a major Toronto-New York ad agency. Left the 'crazy', spiritually-draining world of advertising after getting a taste of the satisfying rewards of teaching English to refugees as a volunteer tutor in T.O. Returned to her native Alberta, so that she could pursue a degree in ESL instruction & Curriculum Design. Completed the Diploma Programme @ U of C in 1993 while teaching Outreach Community-based ESL and assisting with the Latin American Literacy Project under the umbrella of the Calgary Separate School Board.

Two years later she went to Guadalajara, Mexico to teach EFL @ Interlingual Idiomas de Ingles. On her return, she decided to teach to International students for a small private institute and help the owner with the marketing and homestay component. Unfortunately the school didn't survive the economically brutal "IMF Era" in Asia & had to close its doors. Using



her resourceful nature, she operated her own tutoring/homestay business for several months before joining a large ESL provider in Calgary where she taught a range of levels, from pre-literate, literacy to advanced studies for almost 4 years.

For the last year she has been preparing her own proposals for various agencies/institutes to facilitate Business Communication Courses to foreign-trained professionals. This has provided her with the opportunity to exercise her creative side by designing many materials, perfecting and supporting all strands of the participants' English proficiency and aiding them with entrance into the regional job market. Many of these individuals have become good friends with whom she can occasionally share some free time. During those 'relaxing' times she enjoys jogging/walking by the Bow River which is close to her condo. As an avid cinema & music buff, the International Film and the Jazz Festivals are 2 functions that she has always attended and of course going to Edmonton to visit family & friends!

She has been a strong supportive member of ATESL since 1991, joined the Executive in 1999 as a MAL then stepped into the role of Co-chair in 2001. In addition to that position, she is on the Advocacy Committee and the Newsletter Committee. As co-chair of the Calgary Local it has been her mandate to make the monthly workshops interesting and functional for the Calgary members. We ask our membership for ideas on what presentations would be useful & try to set up appropriate themes. Although she is looking forward to celebrating the 25th anniversary of ATESL at the 2004 conference it will bring her participation as co-chair to a close but she will always be active in some capacity. In a few years she will be traveling more than ever but on her regular returns to her native province she'll always take the time to 'catch-up' on the success and growth of ATESL. The organization has always supplied an excellent array of interesting workshops and colleagues.

### **Maria MacMinn**

Maria has been working in education since 1978 starting in Toronto, Ontario after graduating first with a degree in Languages and Literature (French, Italian and Spanish) from U of T and then with a second degree in Education. While she worked in the Ontario education system

teaching French and Italian to elementary school children, she also worked with a grass roots community group doing outreach into the immigrant community and offering ESL classes to adults and children.

She took a detour into the business world after moving to Calgary in 1981 to work with the Hudson Bay Co. training adults to use a new computer system and implementing a productivity evaluation system. In 1985 she found her way back to ESL which was an area that she missed and loved. Since then she has taught with BVC and worked in a number of program development, management positions at the Calgary Board of Education, Columbia College, and Almadina Charter School. She is currently working with Calgary Chinese Community Services Association on a Bilingual ESL project running in the Chinese and South East Asian communities. As of January 2004 she has been working as Director of Robertson College in Calgary which will eventually be bringing its vocational programs to the international and immigrant sector in Calgary.

She has worked with ATESL over the years on various committees. In 1999, she was Learners Conference chair and most recently she has had the honour of being on the board as President Elect, President in 2002/2003 and currently as Past President.

### **Marian Rossiter**

Marian Rossiter is Co-Chair of the ATESL Edmonton local. Her teaching career began in England, where, after completing a BA Honors degree in French and Spanish at the University of Alberta, she taught French at a secondary school for several years. She returned to Canada to do an MA in French and became involved in assisting refugees arriving from Chile. Her interest and subsequent training in TESL were the direct results of this experience.

Over the past 25 years, Marian has taught ESL to adults at NorQuest College and the Faculty of Extension, been involved in the administration of ESL programs, and served as Edmonton Co-Chair and ATESL Accreditation Committee member. Following her doctorate at the U. of A. and a year of research at Simon Fraser University, she returned to the TESL program at the University of Alberta as Assistant Professor

and TESL program coordinator. Her current research focuses on second language acquisition, oral fluency, motivation, learner strategies, and international correspondence relationships. A regular presenter at ATESL and applied linguistics conferences, she currently serves as Program Committee Chair for ATESL 2004.

### **Paul Holmes**

Paul Holmes was born in Cape Town, South Africa, where he completed his ESL teacher training through an annual course offered by T.E.F.L., Training Institute of Ireland. In 1995 he immigrated to England where he met his wife, Lydia, a Korean Canadian. They married and moved to Calgary and then Edmonton where they have lived since 2003 with their two-year old daughter, Isabelle.

Paul has an undergraduate degree in Inter-Cultural Studies and is currently pursuing a Master of Arts degree in the same area.

Paul was appointed Treasurer of ATESL in October 2003.

### **Peter Myhre**

Peter Myhre is an ESL instructor at Grant MacEwan College, with a wide range of educational experiences both here and abroad, as a teacher, editor, and evaluator.

In 1994, Peter graduated from the University of Alberta with a degree in Secondary Education. He worked for two years as a teacher and substitute teacher for both a native school and the County of Wetaskiwin, before leaving for Korea.

From 1996 to 1999, Peter taught English for private institutes in and around Seoul. In 1999, he was hired by the publishing company YBM Si-Sa-Yong-O-Sa, where he worked for many editorial departments within the company, including National Geographic, Korea. During this time he also wrote a children's story, which YBM later published.

In 2000, Peter returned to Canada and enrolled in the University of Alberta's TESL diploma program. He proceeded into their Master's of Education program the following year. After completing his Master's in 2002, he worked for the English Language Program at the University of Alberta's Faculty of Extension.

Since 2000, Peter has been actively involved in ATESL. For the year 2001-2002, he was the secretary for the Edmonton local. In 2001, he worked with the committee that was developing ethical guidelines for ESL professionals in Alberta. In September 2002, he led a workshop on dealing with disruptive learner behaviour. He is currently Co-Chair of the Edmonton ATESL local and Registrar for the upcoming ATESL 2004 conference.

### **Gail Kingwell**

Currently a member of the ATESL Accreditation committee, she has worked in the field of ESL for many years - as a classroom teacher, program administrator, and instructor in TESL courses. Most of her experience was with the Calgary Board of Education. She previously served on the ATESL Board as President and TESL Canada representative. She is working as a consultant in ESL and also doing some work with the Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies. She has an MA in TESL from the University of London in the UK. She looks forward to working on the Accreditation Committee and with the other Board members on issues that ESL professionals are facing in Alberta.

### **Jaye Fredrickson**

President, ATESL

Jaye Fredrickson was recently appointed Dean of Language Training and Adult Literacy at NorQuest College. Prior to joining NorQuest, she was Director of Language Services for the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, where she was involved in the development and delivery of ESL training for recent immigrants and refugees. She is also a member of the Adjudication Committee for the Prairie Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Integration.

She has an extensive background in public policy development with the federal government and served formerly as Director General of Planning and Strategic Initiatives for Western Economic Diversification Canada.

Born into an Icelandic fishing family that lived and worked on Lake Winnipegosis in Manitoba, she was educated at the Universities of Winnipeg, Manitoba and Alberta, and holds graduate degrees in History, Business and Education. Her current research interests are in the area of immigrant second language acquisition and its relationship to training and employment in Canada.

### **Lorna Allen and Mary Calder**

Lorna Allen and Mary Calder are pleased to be the Chairpersons of the 2004 ATESL Provincial Conference. Lorna and Mary have been working together for the past ten years. Both are teachers in the Intensive Day Program at the Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta, and both have been active members of ATESL Edmonton for as many years. Lorna is a graduate student in the TESL Program in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Alberta and Mary has been a sessional instructor in the same program. They are looking forward to working with the enthusiastic and dedicated members of the Conference Committee to prepare for the October 22, 23 conference to be held at the Coast Terrace Inn in Edmonton.

### **Shaheen Murji**

Shaheen Murji works as an instructor at the Languages Institute at Mount Royal College. She has worked in the field of ESL/Adult Education since 1985 and brings with her a strong perspective on ESL from both the administrative and teaching aspects. She has also worked in the corporate arena as a technical writer and trainer. Her educational background includes a Masters of Arts in Adult Education and a Bachelor of Arts in English language with concentration in French and Spanish. Shaheen has acted in an advisory role on the Skills and Training Development Program at Calgary Immigrant Women's Association. She has just completed a three year stint on the ATESL executive and is currently the Alberta Representative on the TESL Canada Board. She is also a member on the TESL Canadian Educational Foundation Board.

### **Tara Holmes**

I can remember attending the first ATESL conference in this province, so I guess that makes me an old-timer. Over the years I've had the opportunity to experience the field of ESL from many perspectives. I've been an ESL teacher both here

and abroad and have taught in community programs, as well as post-secondary and workplace contexts. After completing graduate work in ESL, I was the program administrator for the Calgary Board of Education ESL program for a number of years. For the past five years I've had my own consulting company and have enjoyed being involved in a diverse range of projects. I feel very fortunate to have chosen this field. It continues to be work that is interesting and challenging and I value the relationships with the many fine people I've met.

### **Terese Szlamp-Fryga**

Terese has been teaching English as a second language at NorQuest College since 1983. Her prior experience includes journalism, public relations, and translation. She has also taught French as a second/foreign language and continues to interpret and translate from Polish into English.

Terese's educational background includes a Bachelor of Arts (Communication Arts) from the University of Montreal, a graduate diploma in post-secondary education from the University of Alberta, and a Masters of Education (Educational Policy Studies) from the same university. She has also studied Polish language, culture, and philology during three and a half years in Poland. Terese is also active in the Canadian Polish community and is currently serving as the president of the Canadian Polish Congress - Alberta Branch.

Terese served as conference co-chair for the ATESL 2002 conference in Edmonton and was recently elected president elect.

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# ESL Projects

## Public Reports

**POST HIGH SCHOOL ESL  
LITERACY RESEARCH AND  
DEVELOPMENT PROJECT PHASE I  
PUBLIC REPORT**

**Prepared for  
Alberta Learning**

**by Diane Hardy  
Bow Valley College, ESL Department**

### Program Overview:

The Post High School ESL Literacy Research and Development Project - Phase One researched issues surrounding young immigrants exiting high school without a diploma due to low literacy skills and/or because they are too old to study in a high school setting, but demonstrate a need for further educational opportunities. The project investigated the learning and language-training needs of young ESL adults with low literacy skills. Through collaboration with the Calgary Separate School District and community organizations that work with young ESL literacy learners, research was conducted to:

- \* identify the demographics of ESL literacy students who are unable to obtain a high school diploma,
- \* identify barriers to further education and/or employment,
- \* identify the language and course content needs of young immigrant literacy learners, and
- \* draw conclusions based on data collected and make recommendations for a post high school program that meets learners' needs.

The research findings identified the high priority learning needs for this target audience. They were used to create a post high school program course guide with a focus on improving ESL literacy skills while helping students successfully bridge literacy gaps to transition into further educational programs, vocational training or the work force.

### 2. Program Objectives:

Phase One of the Post High School ESL Literacy

Research Project proposed to:

- \* collaborate with educational institutions and community organizations that have a high population of young adult ESL literacy learners to identify the needs of and barriers faced by these learners,
- \* conduct research into the demographics of ESL literacy learners who are no longer eligible to attend Calgary high schools, aged 18 - 25,
- \* describe in a research report the program needs of young adult ESL literacy learners,
- \* make program development recommendations to bridge the gaps between literacy instruction and further education to encourage a more seamless flow within the education system for adult literacy learners, and
- \* custom design an ESL literacy program around research findings that meets the needs of these learners.

### 3 Summary of Project Activities:

Phase One of the Post High School ESL Literacy Research and Development Project was comprised of two components: 1) research the learning needs of young adult immigrants that have been identified with low literacy skills, and 2) use the research findings to develop an effective ESL literacy program that focuses on improving the reading, writing, and language skills of immigrant youth to help bridge the transition into further educational or vocational programming.

### Component One: ESL Literacy Research

The following outlines the fundamental activities in the literacy research component:

1. A research project timeline and outline was drawn up to form the structure and guidance for the research project.
2. Key questions and focus ideas were determined to provide guidance to the research project.
3. Questionnaires and interview guides were prepared for focus groups and one-on-one interviews with immigrant youth with literacy issues.
4. Questionnaires and interview guides were prepared for ESL instructors and community leaders.
5. Research was conducted into programs currently providing educational, employment or lit-



eracy training to youth in Calgary. Data was organized into an easy to read chart for inclusion in the research report.

6. Educational and community organizations that include immigrant youth in their population were identified as possible participants in this project.

7. The Calgary Board of Education (CBE) and the Calgary Separate School District (CSSD) were contacted in regards to possible participation in the research project.

8. Permission was received from the CSSD to conduct research in their high schools.

9. Focus group and interview times were set up with the ESL instructors in the participating schools and the necessary paperwork was forwarded to them.

10. Focus groups and one-on-one interviews were conducted in three schools with a total of 22 students.

11. Interviews with instructors were conducted at their convenience at a later date.

12. Ongoing interviews were also conducted with immigrant youth demonstrating literacy needs outside the school system.

13. Data from the focus groups, learner interviews and instructor interviews was compiled and analyzed for inclusion in the research report.

14. Fifty community leaders in programs serving youth were contacted with questionnaires regarding the youth they served.

15. Articles and written texts relating to immigrant youth and ESL training and literacy issues were identified, located and studied. Pertinent information was documented and cited to form part of the research report.

16. Data collected from the interviews, focus groups and questionnaires and the literature research was used to form the basis of the research report.

17. The report underwent one revision prior to its completion.

### **Component Two: ESL Literacy Program Development**

The information gained through the ESL literacy research component was used to develop a course guide for a program entitled The Young Adult ESL Literacy Program. This course guide focuses on increasing ESL literacy skills in order to successfully transition learners into further educational programs. The following outlines the fundamental activities in the program development of this project:

1. Using the information gained through focus groups and interviews with key stakeholders, the

project researcher created a blueprint for an ESL literacy program that identified the knowledge and skills necessary for a transitional program for young immigrants exiting high school.

2. ESL literacy benchmark competency checklists were created for reading and writing strands. The checklists combined the ESL competencies outlined in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners* and the Alberta Education - English As A Second Language (Senior High) Program.

3. A course guide writer was hired to write the course guide for The Young Adult ESL Literacy Program. The course guide integrated the competencies outlined in the checklists to create a program with achievable outcomes.

4. Bow Valley College collaborated with the University of Calgary and used *LearningByDesign* website to support the development of the course guide.

5. The course guide went through two revisions prior to its completion.

### **4. Project Outcomes:**

Phase One of the Post High School ESL Literacy Research and Development Project recognized the importance of a bridge program to aid in the transition of young adult immigrants with low literacy skills from high school to further education. In order to develop a responsive program, research was conducted to establish the demographics, interests and most pressing learning needs of this targeted segment of learners. The findings were detailed in the report entitled *Effective Post High School Programming: Evaluating the Needs of Immigrant Youth with Literacy Issues* and were used to design a transitional program that is relevant to the age, interests and learning needs of this group.

The following outcomes demonstrate successful achievement of the project goals:

1. A report summarizing the process, results and conclusions of the research conducted was completed. This report, *Effective Post High School Programming: Evaluating the Needs of Immigrant Youth with Literacy Issues*, includes:

- A summary of and response to literature research in the area of immigrant youth and ESL/literacy instruction including:
- An analysis of data gleaned from the focus groups, interviews and questionnaires was documented including:
- Recommendations for a responsive young adult literacy program.

2. A course guide was developed for a pilot program called *The Young Adult ESL Literacy Program*. This program was designed to address the needs of young immigrants with low literacy skills who are exiting high school without a diploma. The course guide to the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners*.

**Stepping Stones to English**  
**Calgary Chinese Community Service**  
**Association Project**

**Funded by Alberta Learning**  
**Public Report**

**Summary of Project Objectives,  
Activities and Outcomes**

**Submitted by Maria Macminn**

***Project Goal/Objective:***

The main goal of this project was to provide an alternative learning option for learners that would not or have not been successful in a traditional ESL program.

Our objective was to introduce a bilingual ESL model into this alternative ESL option. In phase one of this project we worked with the Chinese community to provide this alternative bilingual ESL model to learners in the following category:

***Profile of learners the program expected to reach in the first phase:***

1. Workers currently in low-skill, low-paying jobs in contexts where languages other than English are used almost exclusively. They have little opportunity to learn English in the workplace and their hours of work do not enable them to participate in classes that are offered in educational institutions.
2. Seniors who speak little or no English, who may be unfamiliar with the larger Calgary community, and who are unable to access services in English or to interact with English speakers in the community. Many are uncomfortable in formal ESL classes.
3. Homebound parents and caregivers - usually mother of small children. Their child-care and housekeeping duties limit their ability to access

ESL classes. These women may have varied educational backgrounds, but the target group will be those who have limited educational backgrounds and have not had professional or specific vocational training

***How did the project achieve this objective?***

- \* Offer an alternative learning model - use of a bilingual facilitator in addition to an ESL teacher
- \* Offer short-term classes that focus on learner identified language needs as the basis of the curriculum for the short 6 week class
- \* Use the contacts and resources of Calgary Chinese Community Services Association (CCCSA) to support the outreach to these target groups.

**Project Activities:**

***Outreach:***

In order to conduct effective outreach into the Chinese community we hired an outreach worker that could speak Mandarin and Cantonese as well as being fluent in English. We were also looking for an outreach worker who could work in the capacity of bilingual facilitator. We were fortunate to have found someone who met all of these criteria.

A number of strategies were suggested and carried out with varying degrees of success. We reviewed the target groups and attempted to make contact with them through the following means:

- Community facilities
- Restaurant owners
- The Chinese newspapers
- Schools
- Referrals from CCCSA

Students were directed to call CCCSA and leave their name and phone number. They were informed that an outreach worker would call them back and talk to them about the program in their first language.

The potential students were screened over the phone by the outreach worker in the students first language using the intake form.

As a result of our outreach efforts we held thirteen 6- week part-time classes between November 12/02 and July 03/3 at the Chinese Cultural Centre and at the Thorn Hill Library.

***Assessment of students and placement:***

Students tested to assess their starting benchmark levels using the CLBPT test. Not all students could be tested with a CLBPT test, so an independent test was developed after the second 6-week session for subsequent testing. Students who had been previously tested by ILVARC were not assessed again with the CLBPT test or independent test.

In addition to the initial intake form that asked students to identify what they wanted to learn English for, we developed an in-class needs assessment strategy (a mapping exercise) that used the bilingual facilitator and a series of visuals to solicit information in the first language and determine what tasks and skill areas that the class wanted to focus on in the 6 week session. The curriculum focus was then based on this in-class needs assessment

End of session assessments based on the tasks and skill areas focused on during each 6-week session were developed for each class.

***ESL Facilitator and Bilingual Facilitator Model:***

Two ESL facilitator positions were filled. A part-time ESL teacher who has had extensive experience with ESL literacy students filled one position. The coordinator filled the other position.

We reviewed literature related to the use of bilingual facilitators and had discussions about the proposed model that might be used. However, until we actually started our first set of classes we were not able to define what that bilingual model would look like. Dialogue, journaling and objective evaluation involving the advisory committee, coordinator and facilitators as well as survey feedback from students are invaluable to the process of building a model that worked to achieve the needs of the students.

We were fortunate to have found someone who could handle both positions (outreach worker and bilingual facilitator). One of the other criteria that we were looking for is the ability to speak both Mandarin and Cantonese.

The bilingual facilitator was used in the first week primarily in the mapping exercises to explore what students needed to learn English for. The mapping exercise was conducted in English and then in Chinese. The Chinese component helped to establish the topics that were of real concern to the students.

Use of the bilingual facilitator enabled us to do a class needs assessment in a thorough and efficient manner. It also allowed students the freedom to express their concerns in a non-threatening manner. Students are traditionally skeptical of taking the lead in determining what they were going to learn in class. However, with a bilingual facilitator we were able to overcome their skepticism with explanations and discussion in Chinese. Once students understood the rationale behind the approach, it was much easier to get through the mapping exercise with the full support of the class.

The ESL teacher took the lead with the activities. The Bilingual facilitator intervened when they couldn't understand a word or explanation that is abstract or needs conceptual understanding. Under normal circumstances, the level of modeling and explanation in English required to overcome this impasse in comprehension would take a very long time and potentially interfere with the flow of the lesson. Using the first language explanation cut down on the instructional time and provided an easy bridge to the flow of learning.

***Program Evaluation:***

In addition to an overall program evaluation tool, the program also developed a student evaluation tool (translated as well into Chinese) that assisted in the collection of qualitative and quantitative data for the program end evaluation.

An intake form was developed that included data that would be useful for a program evaluation.

***Teaching Strategies and Resources:***

We used a variety of teaching strategies and a minimal number of original texts. Most of the initial teaching strategies were developed around student generated language experience stories and original teacher developed material. Visuals were the key instructional tools for teaching. We sought out materials with accompanying visuals related to topic areas such as time, using the telephone, health, safety, reading the newspaper.

**Outcomes and Recommendations:**

***1. CLB levels of Students:***

What is interesting about the CLB test results is that from **76% - 86%** of the assessment results fall into the Pre Benchmarks to CLB 2 range for all skill areas.

***2. Projected Progress of Students:***

Our proposed outcome related to language acquisition and progress was based on building competency through short, task and skill-based instruction coupled by bilingual facilitation. Our initial expectations for progress were ambitious based on the recent research study conducted by David Watt and Deirdre Lake- Benchmarking Adult Rates of Second Language Acquisition and Interpretation: How Long and How Fast? Final Report Phase 1, 2001/2002.

The study identifies the following rates of English language acquisition based on first language educational background and **250 hours** of instruction. It is important to note that students in this study did not have the benefit of a bilingual facilitator in addition to an ESL facilitator:

***Approximate Rate of English Language Acquisition based on 250 hours of Instruction - Canadian Language Benchmarks is the measurement tool***

<b>Years of Education</b>	<b>Listening/Speaking</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>
0-7	1/3 of a benchmark	1/3 of a benchmark	1/2 of a benchmark
8-12	1/2 a benchmark	1 benchmark	1/2 of a benchmark
13 - 16	1/2 a benchmark	1 benchmark	1/2 a benchmark
17+	2/3 of a benchmark	1 1/4 benchmark	2/3 of a benchmark

Based on our initial expectations that students would progress one benchmark level in 2 six-week sessions (70 hours) or 1/2 a benchmark in one six-week session (35 hours) in one of the skills areas, the following chart estimates the rate of progress of our students in each skill area. The measurement tool used in this chart is based on the number of six-week (35 hours of instruction) sessions it would take to progress one benchmark level and doesn't take into account the use of a bilingual facilitator:

**Approximate number of six week sessions (35 hours of instruction without a bilingual facilitator) that it would take a Stepping Stones to English student to progress one Canadian Language Benchmark level**

# of students	% of total # (85)	Yrs. of Education	Listening/Speaking	Reading	Writing
25	30	0-7	42	42	28
45	53	8-12	28	14	28
7	8	3 - 16	28	14	28
8	9	17+	9	14	9



Although the research study did not take into account the addition of a bilingual facilitator in the learning process, it is evident from the study's findings that we need to revisit our expectations relative to the rate of language acquisition of the students in our Stepping Stones to English project.

The rate of progress would be very difficult to monitor based on the statistics on rate of language acquisition (Benchmarking Adult Rates of Second Language Acquisition and Interpretation: How Long and How Fast? Final Report Phase 1, 2001/2002.) Therefore we documented progress not in terms of progress to another benchmark level, but progress in terms of

1. task based assessments within a benchmark level that the teacher determined students in class were capable of working within
2. program evaluation that determined confidence level

### ***3. The role of the CLBs:***

The role of the CLBs in this project is something that we reviewed and assessed on an ongoing basis. We determined the following about the CLBs relative to this project:

- a. It was necessary to become very familiar with the CLBs in order to assess and establish the starting points of our students as well as the range within which our students could work
- b. The CLBs assisted us in determining which tasks and strands were realistic to teach within a six week session. We consequently determined that a 12 week time frame would give students more measurable progress.

### ***4. Outreach:***

\* In the advertising that went out in the community, we offered a choice of locations. However, the majority chose the Chinese Cultural Centre as their choice location. Even for students who were new to Calgary or who were seniors and came to school by transit, the Cultural Centre was a landmark that was easily recognizable and familiar.

### ***5. Target Group:***

The profiles of our students suggest that through our outreach we were able to reach the three target groups as identified in the introduction to this report:

- \* Workers currently in low-skill, low-paying jobs in contexts where languages other than English are used almost exclusively.
- \* Seniors who speak little or no English.
- \* Homebound parents and caregivers.

However, we found that there was another group in addition to our 3 targeted groups that we were reaching. This fourth group of students was comprised of students who were very new to Calgary, were not confident enough to enter a part-time English only class and were waiting for acceptance into a fulltime or part-time LINC class. Although the percentage of students in this category is small, (**22 %** or **19 out of 85** students as per chart # 17) anecdotal comments from program evaluation results indicated that they felt more capable of entering English - only classes as a result of taking a bilingual ESL class..

### ***6. General summary observations about using a bilingual facilitator:***

It became quite evident from this experience that teaching a class involves much more than the fundamental teaching and learning of English language skills. We are also dealing with the dynamics of building a community of learners. This means that we are dealing with students building relationships with each other and the teachers. The politics of socializing in a group and building a group from a collection of strangers is as important as the process of teaching and learning. Having someone who can translate not just language but social and cultural understandings have been extremely helpful in building communication beyond language.

The consequence of having a bilingual facilitator in an ESL class has been that students have been able to learn more material than would be normally be covered in the same amount of time without a bilingual facilitator. 75 out of 85 students filled out a program evaluation form. In the self evaluation portion of the program evaluation **90%** indicated that their confidence levels had increased **2 to 5 levels** after participating in bilingual ESL classes. Comments from program evaluations attributed the increase in their confidence to learn and use English to having a bilingual facilitator in the class.

**EDMONTON MENNONITE CENTRE FOR  
NEWCOMERS (EMCN)**

**ENGLISH IN THE WORKPLACE AT  
PERFORMANCE APPAREL CANADA  
(PAC - formerly Prof Canada)**

**Prepared by  
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**Language Training Programs Public Report**

Summary of Project Objectives,  
Activities and Outcomes

**Project Objectives**

The purpose of this project was to be innovative in its provision of contextualized English language training in the workplace to multi-barriered immigrants who have had little or no opportunity to access regular LINC or ESL programs in the past. Its aim was to provide an environment in which learners could acquire and/or improve essential everyday interpersonal communication skills, the lack of which has previously prevented them from becoming more active and successful participants in the workforce, at home, in their communities, and in Canadian society in general.

More specific project objectives were as follows:

- \* Provide quality English language instruction and a positive learning environment to company workers.
- \* Facilitate the process of workers acquiring and improving basic everyday reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.
- \* Focus on developing learners' interpersonal communication skills in order to ease difficulties among staff and between management and staff.
- \* Use relevant workplace knowledge, skills and resources as a vehicle for English language instruction.
- \* Create a syllabus that is reflective of the needs of company employees and management.
- \* Establish and maintain a cooperative and effective working relationship between PAC and EMCN.
- \* Encourage participants to use English as much as possible at the work site.
- \* Use learner centred teaching activities and ma-

terials.

- \* Create opportunities for learners to practice and build their confidence in using English.
- \* Facilitate learners' success in the workplace and integration into Canadian society by improving their basic everyday English language abilities.

**Project Activities**

Project activities aimed to develop employees' English language skills in two main areas:

1. Workplace Culture and Communication

2. English for Everyday Purposes

Project activities consisted of highly contextualized materials and resources drawn from the workplace in addition to learners' everyday lives and were carried out using learner centred teaching methods that focused on increasing learners' communicative competence in English. The four skills areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening were taught in an integrated fashion in each class, and the instructor was responsible for conducting regular on-going assessment of learners' skill development.

*Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners and English as a second language - for adults* was used as a guide throughout in developing project activities and in establishing and assessing outcomes.

The Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers offered four ten-week sessions of English in the Workplace classes to a total of twenty learners from September 2002 to June 2003. Classes took place twice weekly for 1 ½ hours each day. In total, 120 hours of English language instruction were provided. Program planning and needs assessment were conducted during the month prior to program start up. Report writing and follow up interviews took place during the month following the end of classes. EMCN's ESL Manager and ESL Program Coordinator along with PAC's Human Resources Manager were responsible for all aspects of project management and implementation. All language training and meetings took place at the company work site.

**Project Outcomes**

The global desired outcome from delivery of an English in the Workplace Program at PAC was to see learners progressing at least one Canadian Language Benchmark level in one or more skill areas (reading, writing, speaking, and

listening). In order to assess learners' language skills, the Workplace English Language Proficiency Assessment (WELPA) was administered to all students upon entry to the class and scores were recorded. Assessments were also done during the middle and at the end of the program in order to track progress. Test scores indicate a progression from Level One to Level Two in all skill areas. Learner performance and progress was also evaluated on an ongoing basis using assessment tools such as oral interviews and written evaluations.

More specific outcomes resulting from this progress include:

- \* Increased use of English in the workplace for interpersonal communications.
- \* Increased communication among all staff.
- \* Increased chances of performing work safely and successfully due to improved English skills.
- \* Better understanding of workplace culture, norms, expectations, policies, procedures, etc.
- \* Better understanding of skills and knowledge needed to maintain or secure other employment.
- \* Increased self-confidence in the workplace and in everyday situations.
- \* Continued provision of opportunities for staff at PAC to develop their English language skills after the completion of this pilot project.

The Human Resources Manager as well as the President of PAC expressed their desire and willingness to continue providing English classes to its employees after the completion of this project. Learners also expressed a strong desire to continue attending English classes at the work site. Learners reported a high level of satisfaction with the EWP program, the quality of instruction and the support given to them by company management and by EMCN. In addition, resources purchased for this program were well used and will provide an excellent base for future language programming at this work site. The company expressed an extremely high level of satisfaction with the instructor as well as with the support received from EMCN on this project. Program success was evaluated on an ongoing basis through regular discussions and meetings between EMCN and PAC staff as well as with learners in order to address any problems and concerns and to assess learner needs and progress.

In conclusion, the English in the Workplace program at PAC was highly successful. The project met its expected outcomes both quantitatively, in terms of producing an observable and measurable

increase in learners' knowledge and skills, and qualitatively, in terms of producing increased learner satisfaction with both home and work life. As one student quoted his instructor, Yangsheng Guo, "Language is power." It has been a great pleasure to be involved in such a worthwhile project for which the most valuable outcome of all is perhaps just that which this student brings to light: language training programs provide tools which have the potential to empower people, and that is why they are so essential.

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## **Using the Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessment for Placement and Admission to Health Care Aide programs at NorQuest College and other post- secondary institutions in Alberta**

### **Public Report**

**Submitted by Anna De Luca  
Coordinator, English Language Training**

**October 22, 2003**

Project Title: *Using the Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessment for Placement and Admission to Health Care Aide Programs at NorQuest College and other post-secondary institutions in Alberta*

Project Dates:

August 19, 2002 to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2003

Project Researcher: Terese Szlamp-Fryga

Project Manager: Anna De Luca

Project Goal: To establish the CLBA or CLBPT as the language proficiency standard assessment for learner exit outcomes from the NorQuest College ESL Intensive Program and admission to NorQuest College's Health Career Programs.

### **Project Objectives:**

- To establish exit standards of proficiency for the highest levels of the ESL Intensive Program

at NorQuest College using the CLBA or CLBPT as an exit measure up to a CLB level 8

- To benchmark the language tasks required by learners to be successful in the Health Care Aide program at NorQuest College
- To use the CLBA or CLBPT to assess the level of English language proficiency of ESL learners successfully enrolled in the Health Care Aide programs at NorQuest College
- To assess the viability of using the CLBA or CLBPT as an admission measure for the Health Career programs at NorQuest College
- To establish Canadian Language Benchmarks as language proficiency admission standards for entrance to Health Care Aide Programming at NorQuest

### Activities:

1. Reviewed CLB projects at other institutions (e.g. SAIT, Red River College, University of Calgary)
2. Travelled to Winnipeg to consult with Lucy Epp at Red River College (*Benchmarking the Nursing Profession project*) to plan research design
3. Travelled to Calgary to consult with Laura Anderson Ho from SAIT, David Watt, University of Calgary and Deidre Lake
4. Conducted standards testing using the CLBA or CLBPT on a representative sample of 28 finishing students in the February to June 2003 cohort of the **ESL Intensive Program** at NorQuest College
5. Conducted standards testing using the CLBA or CLBPT on a representative sample from the learner population in five intakes from September 2002 to June 2003 in the **Health Care Aide Program** at NorQuest College
6. Conducted analysis of Health Care Aide instructional materials and texts as well as speaking and listening tasks required in the classroom, and lab. Established benchmark levels required for success.
7. Analyzed data to establish whether ESL Intensive Program graduates have sufficient language competency in the four skill areas to be successful in the Health Career Program.
8. Conducted a focus group with Health Care Aide instructors and coordinator to elicit information regarding challenges that second language

students enrolled in the Health Care Aide Program face

9. Prepared final report including research process and data

### Outcomes:

- Established exist standards of proficiency for the highest level of the ESL Intensive Program at NorQuest College
- A Canadian Language Benchmark average of 6/7 has been established as a possible standard for admission to the Health Care Aide Program at NorQuest College
- Data from focus group survey regarding challenges of career training in a second language has been compiled and reported
- Final Report including evaluation of outcomes and recommendation for further action has been produced

### Findings:

- An average CLB level of 7 is the preferred standard for success in Health Care Aide training.
- Since the language level of classroom instruction in the Health Care Aide Program courses is slightly higher than what the second language learners tested at, we can assume that they struggle through some of the material and probably have to do extra work to keep up with the course work. Support mechanisms have been integrated in the program and are available to students. For example, students can re-take tests up to three times and study support is available.
- Graduates from the ESL Intensive program at NorQuest College (who have received an average of 12 months of ESL) have a high enough CLB level to enter Health Care Aide Programs at NorQuest College. However, if they plan on attending higher post-secondary education, they will struggle because their language level is still relatively low (CLB 6/7) for entrance into post-secondary programs. Current research suggests that a CLB level of at least 8 is desirable.
- Currently the TABE, a reading test, is being used at NorQuest College as an admission requirement to Health Care Aide Programs; how-



ever, CLB scores are a better measurement of a students' overall language proficiency and therefore, may be better predictors of success in a training program.

- The CLBPT is a viable admission measure for entrance to the Health Care Aide Programs at NorQuest College. It measures a candidate's proficiency level in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

- Language proficiency is only one predictor of success. Other factors may include prior training or experience, motivation, effective study skills and academic support. Therefore, when considering the use of CLBPT scores as admission requirements, the scores should be used in conjunction with other factors as indicators of successful completion of training and not as definite cut off scores.

- Second language learners in the Health Care Aide Programs face a number of challenges. Some of these challenges are:

- \* cultural barriers (e.g. re-learning how to do something in a different way rather than in the way it was done in their home countries)
- \* higher than average exam anxiety - particularly computer-based exams
- \* greater time requirement to process information in a second language
- \* not as independent as first language students; need more guidance in class
- \* normal challenges that other adult learners have, e.g. family and other commitments which cut down on homework and study time

### **Recommendations:**

1. Bridging courses or specialized language courses, especially with a strong focus on reading and in specific vocabulary development will help second language learners achieve greater success in career programs.
2. College-wide acceptance of CLBA/CLBPT scores as a means to measure language proficiency will help immigrants enter programs for which they have the necessary skills. The advantages of CLBA/CLBPT as assessment tools is that they are ESL friendly and they measure language proficiency in all four skills. The acceptance of these tools will help remove some of the current barriers that are preventing skilled immigrants from fast-tracking into training and employment for which they already have the experience and skills. Both Red River College and SAIT have

been successful in establishing Canadian Language Benchmarks entrance requirements.

3. Promote greater awareness and understanding of the CLBA/CLBPT tests within NorQuest College's departments, especially the assessment department and the registrar's office.

4. Make CLBPT more accessible as a placement tool within programs. For example, in the ESL Intensive Program at NorQuest College, if students could be admitted with "fresh" CLB scores, then the students' needs could be better aligned with the curriculum.

### **Government Supports 84 Commission Recommendations**

**Edmonton...** The Alberta government supports 84 of the 95 recommendations of Alberta's Commission on Learning, including class-size guidelines, greater emphasis on fine arts and second-language learning and increased focus on supporting Aboriginal students and students with special needs.

"Alberta's Commission on Learning gave us some very good recommendations," said Learning Minister, Dr. Lyle Oberg. "It also gave us an unparalleled opportunity to turn the page and start a new chapter in Alberta's education system. We're going to take full advantage of it. Today, we have the beginnings of a new plan. Tomorrow, we get down to the business of making it a reality."

Government and education stakeholders will now begin working collaboratively on implementation plans to phase in each of the 84 supported recommendations. Affected stakeholders will be consulted and consideration will be given to matters ranging from how the recommendations fit with existing initiatives and one another, to what the financial needs will be. "There are significant costs associated with implementing many of these recommendations," said Oberg. "That's one of the areas we'll be looking at as we phase in these recommendations over the coming years. Although it's impossible to put a dollar figure on things right now, education is government's top priority and we are committed to investing in it." The Commission's recommendation that \$90.6 million be invested in the K-12 education system no later than Budget 2004 has already been fulfilled.

Of the remaining 11 Learning Commission recommendations, nine are seen as having very significant implications for the system and its stakeholders, and they warrant further review before any final decisions are made. These recommendations include full-day and junior kindergarten, removing principals from the Alberta Teachers' Association, and a new collective bargaining model.

The remaining two recommendations - that school boards be allowed additional taxation authority and that school infrastructure be consolidated within the department of Learning - have been turned down.

"Alberta Infrastructure is the expert in government-owned and supported infrastructure projects, including schools. It would be costly and inefficient to make this administrative change that would have no benefit for learners," said Oberg. "As for giving school boards additional taxing authority, Albertans have expressed strong objections against it."

Alberta's Commission on Learning submitted its [final report](#) to government on October 7, 2003.

## THE ATESL NEWSLETTER

Published Quarterly

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Announcements, workshop dates, book reviews,  
teaching ideas, and articles relevant to the field

welcome

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