



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.

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ATESL FALL CONFERENCE

October 19 & 20, 2007

Mount Royal College

Lincoln Park Campus
4825 Mount Royal Gate S.W.
Calgary, AB, T3E 6K6

For more conference information:
http://www.atesl.ca/07conf_index.html

President's Message
Justine Light – ATESL President

Well, Spring has finally sprung in Alberta and new for 2007 is the Federal Provincial Agreement on Immigration, announced in Calgary in May. This agreement lays out the Alberta Government's new priorities for immigration and articulates a desire to increase the number of new immigrants arriving in Alberta. It is imperative that as Alberta's percentage share of new immigrants to Canada climbs, sufficient levels of support for new immigrants in settlement, language training and workplace integration initiatives keep pace. A great deal of information and feedback related to the provision of such services was generated by ATESL's recent project with Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry, and I encourage you to go and read the reports at the ATESL website, where you can also find a link to the media release regarding the new immigration agreement.

On the website you can also see the initial stages of the construction of the website for the 2007 ATESL provincial conference, Enriching our Environment. I encourage you to share your expertise and present at the conference in October.

Helping immigrants integrate in Canada

Summary of: Keynote address:

*"The impact of cultural differences on LINC teachers",
LINC PD Retreat, Jasper, March 6, 2007*

Lionel LaRoche Ph.D., P.Eng, recently gave the keynote address at the LINC Retreat in Jasper and he was invited to submit a summary of his keynote address to the ATESL newsletter.

As most English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers working with adult immigrants know, the primary motivation of their students when studying English is to get a job that makes use of the experience, expertise and education that they acquired in their home countries. Many immigrants place expectations on their ESL teachers that can be hard to fulfill, because immigrants and ESL teachers have different perspectives on their social positions. This article aims to describe how immigrants see themselves and their ESL teachers socially in order to suggest ways in which ESL teachers can better help immigrants integrate into Canadian society.

Relative to the rest of the world, Canada is a relatively egalitarian society. Generally, Canadians do not expect people in positions of authority to play by different rules than the rest of the population. By contrast, most countries from which recent immigrants to Canada come from are significantly more hierarchical than Canada. In much of Asia, Eastern Europe, Africa and Latin America, the psychological distance between people and their managers or teachers is significantly higher than the psychological distance between Canadians and their managers or teachers.

In addition, the point system put in place by Citizenship and Immigration Canada requires that all immigrants to Canada have a high level of formal education. In most developing countries, having a Bachelor automatically puts you in the elite of this country: Many people can neither read nor write and few have completed the equivalent of high school. This implies that most immigrants who come to Canada were in very high social positions in their home countries.

The following table illustrates the different social positions of a professional in Canada and in India (here, a professional is someone who needs at least a Bachelor to do his or her job – this includes teachers, engineers, dentists, pharmacists, IT professionals, medical doctors, professors, accountants, etc.) by comparing the ratios of the average starting salary of professionals to the GDP per capita in each country. Please note that these numbers are approximate; they are meant to illustrate a trend rather than be used in a precise manner. Here, the GDP per capita is used as the measure of the average income of people in either India or Canada.

Country	Gross Domestic Product GDP / Capita	Average starting salary of professionals	Ratio of these #s
Canada	\$30,000 / year	\$45,000 / year	1.5
India	\$700 / year	\$14,000 / year	20

As this table shows, the starting salary of Indian professionals is 20 times the income of the average Indian. What this means in practice is that a starting professional in India can afford to hire several people to deal with domestic chores; many Indian professionals have several staff members (cook, nanny, driver, maid, gardener, etc.) working for them full-time and around the clock. By contrast, the starting salary of professionals in Canada is only 1.5 times the income of the average Canadian and most Canadian professionals cannot afford to hire a cleaning lady more than a few hours a week. In other words, the social position of most professionals in developing countries is much higher than the social position of professionals in Canada.

When they come to Canada, the initial expectations of many immigrants is that, after a short period of adaptation (and many expect that this adaptation period to last less than two years), they will have the same jobs and the same social positions as what they had in their home countries. Imagine the frustration and disappointment of a Nigerian engineer who, at the age of 27, owned a villa with extensive grounds and had a staff of five taking care of him and his family and who ended up living in a basement apartment in Canada during his first three years in this country.

Another important point to keep in mind is the extensive deference that students will give to their teachers and professors in their home countries. ESL students who come from countries that are both hierarchical and developing see their professors as very powerful people, who have extensive connections that they can easily leverage and who can therefore get jobs for people. Indeed, in their home countries, professors have taught to the elite (remember that anyone who has gone beyond the equivalent of high school is part of the elite there), so they can call their former students and easily ask them for favours on behalf of one of their current students. Former students will help, since they still owe the same deference to their teachers after they graduate as they do while they are studying.

Note that this does not apply in the situation where students perceive themselves as having a higher social position than their teachers. This happens relatively frequently in the case of engineers, for example, who are considered back home as having higher social positions than language teachers. In that case, students may consider that the information provided by ESL teachers is not valid since it does not come from a reputable source (i.e. a source that is in a higher social position than they are).

When immigrants come to Canada, they project onto Canada the structure of their home countries. While they realize that a few things work differently before coming here, the basic expectation of most immigrants (indeed, most people until they have tried to get something done in a place outside their native country) is that Canada works more or less the same way as their home country. Since they were so successful back home, they believe they understand the unwritten rules of society. In practice, they actually understand the unwritten rules of their home societies very well, but they underestimate the magnitude of the differences between the unwritten rules of their home societies and the unwritten rules of Canadian society.

A good example of this is the experience of a French chemical engineer who obtained a Ph. D. in distillation from an American university. Upon graduation, he decided to look for a position in Canada. Projecting onto Canada the structure of French society, he determined that his best chances to secure employment that would be in line with his education were in Montreal, Toronto or Vancouver; indeed, in France, his best career chances would have been in Paris, so he decided to look for a job in the Canadian equivalent of Paris, which in his mind were Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. Since the industrial sector that employs the largest number of distillation engineers is the oil and gas industry, his best chances of finding a job making use of his education and knowledge were actually in Calgary. He did find positions in Montreal and Toronto at the Ph.D. level, but did not find any position there that made use of his distillation knowledge. Over time, he realized that there were only two organizations in Canada that were interested in his distillation knowledge and that both were located in Calgary.

As this clearly demonstrates, Canadian ESL teachers and their adult students are often in very different mind spaces. As a result, the information that teachers try to impart to their students is not always integrated in the students' thought processes; many ESL students simply can't understand the information they are provided because it does not fit their view of the world.

So what can ESL teachers do in order to help their students integrate more effectively into Canadian society? One of the most helpful approaches that ESL teachers can take is to explain to their students how Canadian society operates by examining with them questions like:

- How do Canadians handle specific situations (such as having one's needs met when one received poor quality service, dealing with a neighbour who makes noise late at night, etc.)?
- How much deference do Canadians show to someone who has authority over them (teacher, manager, police officer, government employee, etc.) and how?
- What does "being a professional" mean to Canadians?
- What does leadership mean to Canadians?
- How do Canadians make small talk (in particular, how to complain about the weather...)?
- How do Canadians tell stories? What stories do they find interesting?
- How do Canadians deal with poor performance from their colleagues?

Obviously, the depth in which these questions can be examined will vary significantly with the language skills of students. Dealing with poor quality service or telling a story requires significantly higher language skills than making small talk, for example.

When examining these questions with students, it is important to go into the details and look for situations where many immigrants are likely to act or react differently than Canadians as a way to illustrate concretely the differences in the thought processes and values. Materials

that can be used to focus on some of these questions include:

- “For Better or For Worse”: The famous comic strip created by Lynn Johnston can be used as the basis for discussions illustrating the different ways that people have to handle a wide range of situations in different parts of the world. Teachers may ask students to read specific strips while asking themselves the following questions:
 - What problem are people facing in this strip?
 - How do they resolve this problem and why?
 - Would the same problem occur back home?
 - If it did, how would their family members handle the same situation and why?
 - What does the difference in actions / reactions indicate about the differences in values between their cultures and Canadian culture?
- “The Greatest Canadian”: This CBC series can help students understand what Canadians value in their leaders. Teachers may ask students to watch parts of or all the series while asking themselves the following questions:
 - What did this person accomplish?
 - What do Canadians value in this person?
 - Would this person be considered a hero in their home country?
 - Why / why not?
 - What traits and actions do people value in their leaders in their home countries?
- “Canada: A People’s History”. This CBC series can help students understand how Canada works by helping them understand how it became what it is today. Teachers ask students to watch parts of or all the series while asking themselves the following questions:
 - What events do Canadians find important?
 - Why is this event important to Canadians?
 - What does this imply about Canadian values and priorities?
 - What are the implications of these values and events on Canadian society today?
 - What does it mean for me in my daily life?
- Children stories and books like “The Prairie Fire” can also help students understand the environment and values that Canadians grow up with.

Overall, ESL teachers play a major role in the lives of many immigrants. They are often their first extensive contact with someone who understands comprehensively the structure of Canadian society and the values and priorities of Canadians. ESL teachers can help immigrants integrate more quickly into Canadian society by trying to impart some of their knowledge to their students as soon as their language skills enable a meaningful conversation on such topics.

For further reading:

- ◆ *Laroche, L., & Rutherford, D. (2007). Recruiting, retaining and promoting culturally different employees. Burlington, MA: Butterworth-Heinemann/Elsevier.*
- ◆ *Laroche, L. (2002). Managing cultural diversity in technical professions. Burlington, MA: Butterworth-Heinemann/Elsevier.*



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ALBERTA HUMAN RESOURCES AND EMPLOYMENT

PUBLIC REPORT

2005-2006

Proposal: Canadian Language Benchmarks Working for Alberta

**Submitted by: Pauline McNaughton
Executive Director, CCLB**

Project Title: Canadian Language Benchmarks Working for Alberta

Project Funding Duration: January 2, 2006– December 31, 2006

The CCLB recognizes that for Alberta as elsewhere, access to employment is an increasingly significant aspect of the process of settlement for newcomers to Canada. Immigrants come to Canada with many skills to contribute to Canadian society, but may face unfair barriers in securing employment. This delays or prevents them from reaching their potential in contributing to Canadian society. These economic realities have led federal and provincial policy-makers and decision-makers to explore new avenues to facilitate the entry of immigrants into the workforce.

The CCLB received funding from the Government of Alberta in order to increase the capacity of institutions and organizations within the Alberta labour market and post-secondary education system to effectively use the Canadian Language Benchmarks national standards for delivery of programs and services to adult newcomers. Four project activities were completed, with the following key outcomes.

1.0 Development of CLB Test Administration supports related to the workplace:

The CCLB carried out activities that increased access to the CLB employment related assessment tools CELBAN (Canadian English Language Benchmark Assessment for Nurses) and worked towards implementation of the WLA (Workplace Language Assessment).

For the WLA, the process of setting standard scores for sample test exemplars was completed, providing a broad range of test exemplars for:

- The WLA Assessment Guide
- The WLA webpages (password protected) for certified assessors
- WLA training
- WLA certification

Key Outcome:

- Validation of Workplace Language Assessment at key Alberta pilot sites

In order to address the demand for CELBAN assessment services by internationally-educated nurses in Calgary, the Government of Alberta provided funding for the establishment of a new test site. Use of the Edmonton site to serve Calgary residents was not proving to be an effective or economical long term solution. A Request for Qualifications was issued in Calgary for institutions interested in becoming an official CELBAN Administration site. Applications were reviewed, and the Calgary Immigrant Aid Society was approved as the official CELBAN administration site in Calgary, following completion of training and certification requirements.

Key Outcomes:

- Establishment of new CELBAN test administration site in Calgary

2.0 National Assessment Framework:

The CCLB is committed to the establishment and maintenance of a comprehensive CLB national assessment system for use in adult ESL community, education, training and labour market, including a system of recognition of CLB assessors and assessment service providers. Stakeholders in Alberta and across Canada need clear information regarding the CLB-based national assessment system. To address this need the CCLB developed a communication tool in order to clearly present the overall national assessment system that supports current language training programs and links newcomers to further training, study or employment.

Knowledge and understanding of the national assessment framework will facilitate the movement of learners from language training to employment and benefit key Alberta stakeholders assisting:

- career counselors and ESL trainers to dialogue effectively with newcomers about language-learning progress and ongoing learning needs
- learners in identifying their language training needs and find appropriate and targeted training
- government to identify gaps and set priorities for further development of national assessment system

Key Outcome:

- Effective communication tool presenting the national CLB assessment systems relevant to all stakeholders.

3.0 Learner Outreach Resources:

The CCLB developed a new, online Learner Gateway to support adult ESL learners in setting and achieving their language learning goals. The specific goals of the Learner Gateway is to help ESL learners better understand the Canadian Language Benchmarks in order to:

- help understand their language proficiency level and what language levels are required to meet their goals for further training or employment
- help identify and describe their language training needs and find appropriate and targeted training
- help set language training goals best suited to occupational goals.

Key Outcome:

- Accessible and authentic learner resources to better support learners in setting and achieving language learning goals

CLB resources were also provided to support rural ESL program delivery, including:

- CLB Literacy Placement Tool
- Integrating CLB Assessment into the ESL Classroom
- CLB Posters
- CLB Can Do Checklists

Key Outcome:

- New resources provided to support rural ESL program delivery.

Project Summary

Connecting ESL Communities and Professionals

**A Language Training Project funded by Alberta Employment,
Immigration and Industry**

By Justine Light – ATESL President

Project Overview

The proposal for this project indicated that with the ever-increasing population of newcomers to Alberta, brought on by flourishing labor market prospects, it is crucial that programs and services are available to ensure that immigrants are adequately prepared for integration into Canadian society. Given that a key component of integration is English language training, ATESL believes it is necessary to have appropriate programs and services in place to assist newcomers to develop their language skills. Therefore, this project came about with two main purposes in mind:

- to assess emerging immigrant language needs and recommend best practices in the province of Alberta
- to provide a mechanism for bringing together expertise in the teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL) to immigrants that exist in the province of Alberta

This project ran from March 2006 to April 2007 and encompassed a wide range of activities. ESL providers and funders were brought together in a series of five workshops held between June 2006 and March 2007. The workshops were held on the following subjects:

- ESL Programming for Settlement and Integration
- ESL Literacy
- ESL Assessment
- Professional Development Opportunities
- Intercultural Competence Training.

These discussion groups involved stakeholders from all over the province and each session consisted of 8 to 10 participants, as well as a workshop coordinator/moderator, and at least one or two government representatives. The aim of the workshops was to create an opportunity for ESL professionals from various communities throughout Alberta to come together to share their knowledge and expertise with one another as well as with ATESL and government representatives. This sharing of knowledge and experience provided insight into the key issues and challenges facing ESL stakeholders. Reports on each individual session

can be found on the ATESL website. These workshops provided interesting feedback for all involved and could provide an opportunity for ATESL to develop future funding proposals and directions for advocacy and professional development. As indicated in the professional development and Intercultural Competence Training workshops, ATESL has a vital role to play in providing an opportunity for ongoing discussions and dialogue around emerging issues that have an impact on ESL professionals in the province.

In March 2006, ATSEL hosted an Enhanced Language Training Conference. This involved coordinators and teachers from on-going Enhanced Language Training Programs. Participants discussed the successes and challenges of programs that are designed to assist internationally educated immigrants who are attempting to access the Alberta labour market in their chosen profession. This two-day forum hosted by ATESL was intended to address the design and delivery of integrated language training programs in Alberta. The enthusiastic response to the ELT conference in 2006 led ATESL to undertake some pre-planning for a future ELT conference, tentatively scheduled for February 2008. A variety of stakeholders met in Edmonton in April 2007 to determine agenda items, issues and logistics for this future conference.

In the Fall of 2006, project funding supported the keynote address given by Ilona Leki at the provincial ATESL conference. Given that ESL teachers play a key role in the successful integration of new Albertans, providing opportunities for these teachers to engage in furthering their knowledge about current trends and best practices in the field is essential. The annual ATESL conference is one such major professional development opportunity and a key component of the conference is bringing respected speakers within the ESL field to Alberta. These speakers share research findings and instructional methods with conference attendees, helping to keep our ESL providers on the cutting edge of the field.

In the Fall of 2006, ATESL undertook a demographic survey of members in order to determine the state of the profession today. The aim of this part of the project was to use survey techniques to measure, analyze, and report on the demographics of the current ESL teaching population in Alberta. The results were fascinating and again can be viewed on the website. The results will provide ESL providers and funders with information important in future planning results.

The website feasibility study was the fourth and final part in the Connecting ESL Communities and Professionals project. The purpose of the website feasibility study, as outlined in the proposal, was to conduct research regarding the feasibility of developing a stand-alone website that lists all ESL, Settlement and Employment related programming for immigrants in Alberta. In particular, it was specified that this research was to include discussions with the Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA) and government funders of immigration related activities, an examination of what is already available on local websites, information on what exists in other jurisdictions, and recommendations on possible options. The final report with its recommendations and comprehensive links can be found online.

In conclusion, in consideration of all aspects of the *Connecting ESL Communities and Professionals* project, it is clear that there is a remarkable wealth of expertise and experience among members of the TESL community in Alberta. A project such as this, which provides occasions for sharing this knowledge and expertise, is of tremendous benefit to all members of the TESL community. As the number of immigrants to our province grows, and the ESL sector expands, ATESL along with our government partners, can provide leadership in the provision of programs of excellence and support for our students and teachers alike.

Thank you to all of the Board members who gave up huge amounts of their time to ensure that this project could be sustained over the 14 month period. I would also like to extend my thanks to all of the consultants hired to undertake the different aspects of the project. I would particularly like to thank GERALYN St. Louis for the leadership role she has played as Project Manager for a large part of this project. Others who worked tirelessly to meet deadlines and provide invaluable support for ATESL are Linda Manimtim, Judy Sillito, Cynthia MacCormac, Juliet Kershaw, and Melanie Johnson. Of course, no ATESL list of thanks would be complete without mention of Ivan Sundal. Once again his attention to detail has kept us on track and accountable. Thanks Ivan! Finally, I would like to thank Carolyn Dieleman for her tireless work for the provision of high quality ESL programming in Alberta.

Please check out the website, www.atesl.ca, for full report details and don't hesitate to contact me with any questions or comments, [c/o atesl@shaw.ca](mailto:c/o_atesl@shaw.ca).

Industry Specific Pre-employment Language Development for Immigrants in Rural Alberta Communities – Phase Two

Report Summary

**Prepared by: Lorene Anderson
March, 2007**



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Thanks and sincere appreciation to those who have given their time and consideration to this project. Without their help and input, it would not have been possible.

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- The representatives of the food processing industry who provided such valuable input to the project.

Special thanks to the following individuals for doing a wonderful job of piloting these projects, for being so responsive to the needs of their clients and for providing such insightful feedback.

- Marg Hein, ESL instructor, Taber and District Adult Learning Council
- Jane Brenner, Executive Director, Taber & District Community Adult Learning Association
- Denise Calderwood, ESL instructor, Willow Creek Community Adult Learning Society
- Kate Glover, Coordinator, Willow Creek Community Adult Learning Society

Executive Summary

This project **Industry Specific Pre-employment Language Development for Immigrants in Rural Alberta Communities – Phase Two** had four objectives. They were to:

1. to create new employment opportunities for ESL speaking immigrants by providing job specific pre-employment training. (Food Processing industry and one other industry)
2. to create a new labour pool for industry (Food Processors and one other industry) by providing job specific pre-employment training for ESL speaking immigrants.
3. to create further training opportunities for ESL immigrants by modifying current training programs to an accessible language level.
4. to further develop local program and instructional capacity in rural communities by assisting existing programs to develop and implement industry specific pre-employment training following the framework/process model developed in Phase One.

These objectives were developed through three main projects.

1. Piloting the **Industry specific Pre-employment language Training: Food Processing** with the Taber & District Community Adult Learning Association and with Willow Creek Community Adult Learning Society and using the feedback to revise the original curriculum as needed.
2. Supporting Brooks Community Adult Learning Council while they used the **Industry Specific Pre-employment Language Training: Program Development Framework** to develop and pilot a curriculum for the Oil and Gas industry for their local employers and ESL clients.
3. Modifying a **Confined Space Entry Program** and a **Skid Steer Program** currently being used by Lethbridge Community College so they are more accessible by ESL learners.

All of the projects were completed and met with favourable reviews. However, the Alberta economy changed significantly from the time this proposal was first put forward until the actual opportunity to run the classes. This resulted in difficulty in finding participants for the pilots, particularly for the Food Processing classes. The originally intended segment of the population for the classes were the Low German Mennonite men who were doing seasonal work in Southern Alberta. 4 years ago, Food Processors were not hiring these men because they didn't "have a grade twelve education". This was their screening tool. However, in the current economy and labour market picture, this situation has changed. The LGM men are employed and are being sought after to work. The interesting outcome of this was the new segment of the population that came to the forefront, the Low German Mennonite women. They were enthusiastic about the food processing courses and liked learning English through this content area. While not necessarily searching for work immediately, many of them would like to get into the workforce when their children are older.

The curriculum and the framework have also been used outside of this project as guides to plan other curriculums. Some communities are using parts of the curriculum to enhance training that they are already providing. They have proven to be valuable resources for the Community Adult Learning Councils. The certificate bearing programs that were modified will also be made available to Community Adult Learning Councils.

The recommendations from this project are:

1. Modify other certificate bearing courses to make them more accessible to ESL learners.
2. Build funding for onsite childcare and transportation into budgets for future programs
3. Provide support for other communities to use the Industry Specific Pre-employment Language Training: Program Development Framework.

Background

This project grew out of the Industry Specific Pre-employment Language Training Program which took place in 2003- 2004. This former project took place at a time when the present economic situation in Alberta was just on the horizon. A labour shortage was imminent and economic growth depended upon immigrants. However, many of the immigrants that were currently employed in seasonal work and looking for permanent work didn't have adequate language skills to participate in the workforce. Today's workforce needs employees that have adequate language skills to access the training needed around downsizing, diversified markets, value added products, lean processing methods, health and safety requirements and restructuring.

Many of the industries that needed to employ immigrants were situated in rural areas of the province. Often, these areas don't have the infrastructure to support language training for specific purposes. The Industry Specific Pre-employment Language Training: Program Development Framework was developed to help rural communities in their efforts to meet the specific language training needs of their local industries and their ESL speakers. The Framework was piloted by using it to develop the Industry Specific Pre-employment Language Training: Food Processors Curriculum. The Food Processing industry was chosen as the pilot industry. Even though this industry doesn't require specific certified training for front line employment it is undergoing an increased need for training. The HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) program, which is becoming more prevalent in food processing plants, requires extensive training and document use. Occupation Health and Safety training is also becoming more extensive and regulated. Employees must have the language skills and document use skills to be able to access this training. The Food Processors Curriculum was designed as a pre-employment training program which would give the learners the skills needed to be able to successfully participate in training while on the job.

The present project, Industry Specific Pre-employment Language Development for Immi-

grants in Rural Alberta Communities - Phase Two, continued from the original project. It piloted the Food Processors Curriculum in two locations, Taber and Granum, and supported another location, Brooks, while it used the Framework to develop another language training program for a local business. It also further developed the theme of making training more accessible to ESL employees by taking two certificate bearing training programs that are used in the workforce and rewriting them at a more applicable level. The rewritten training programs also contain strategies for instructing ESL learners and a study supplement for ESL learners in these programs.

Findings

- ◇ The surge in the Alberta economy affected the expected targeted audience for piloting the Food Processor curriculum. People that would ordinarily have been suitable for these training programs are now employed. The Low German Mennonite men are being enticed to stay on farms by being offered better salaries and other perks such as housing and year round employment. Also, because many food processors so badly need employees they have dropped their previous screening tool and, have already begun hiring Low German Mennonites. It was quite a struggle to get enough learners to attend the two pilots of the Food Processing Curriculum. However, the result has been to locate another pool of learners that seem ideally suited to this labour market; Low German Mennonite women.
- ◇ Even though their husbands are working, much of the work is seasonal and with the rising costs in Alberta these families need help in meeting the household bills. The women may need to work, at least part time, to help support their families. The women that attended the classes were very eager to learn about the workforce.
- ◇ Low German Mennonite women are available, interested in and willing to take courses. However, they bring their own special needs to classes. The classes must accommodate lack of transportation and on-site childcare and must be flexible in timing.
- ◇ Transportation was an issue for the women in the pilot programs. In one program the instructor provided transportation for one of the participants and the CALC employed a driver to pick up some of the other women. This has to be taken into consideration when planning programs in rural areas.
- ◇ Providing onsite day care is a necessity for many immigrant women and the cost for this must be factored into future programs. However, this too, had positive repercussions. The children loved coming and playing with their friends. They would get up in the morning and ask their mothers if they were going to play that day. Many of these moms and children are quite isolated and this allowed them to experience the socialization needed for school.
- ◇ One of the most interesting findings has been the "spin off" opportunities that are

presented by holding whole day classes. As mentioned, in the Willow Creek program, the lunch hours were used to have guest speakers from community health programs and to provide information around nutrition and cooking. The women in the class loved these sessions. They have compiled a cookbook of the recipes that they have tried and have learned how to read recipes. They also had the Public Health Nurse speak to them about immunization for children, use of care seats for children, women's health (breast self examination, pap smears), and the Dental Hygienist spoke to them about children's and adults dental health.

- ◇ As well as gaining knowledge about the workplace and information that could be applied to their home, the women gained confidence in their social ability and their ability to learn. Because they were introduced to guest speakers, other classmates, instructors, coordinators and employers they learned how to react in unfamiliar social situations and became more acclimatized to Canadian ways.
- ◇ This course has been a springboard for future courses. Because the moms and children have enjoyed meeting together twice a week for the past month, the Willow Creek Community Adult Learning Council is going to offer a "Stay and Play" program for children as well as a conversational English class for the moms. Also most of these same women are enrolled in an upcoming class, following the same format, which will help them apply for their driver's license. Several of the women want to get a driver's license because they want to be able to get a job.
- ◇ The instructors in the rural communities have a very good knowledge of their learners and communities. They are able to expand the programming to meet other needs beyond the prescribed curriculum.
- ◇ The Food Processing Curriculum has been very well received in communities. Several communities are using parts of it or strategies from it to enhance their other programs. The curriculum deals with facets of Canadian workplace culture that are transferable to many different settings. As mentioned previously, one of the communities that piloted it has used it as a model for their next course on "Getting a Driver's License".
- ◇ The Brooks coordinator who used the framework for curriculum development found it very user friendly and easy to follow. She used it to prepare and pilot a curriculum for the Oil and Gas industry. She then used it to prepare another curriculum for the local meat processing plant.
- ◇ The challenge is still finding work positions for the learners once they have finished the course. Even though the participants are now better prepared for the workplace it may still take time for them to get other factors in their life arranged so that they can actually apply for a job. In the case of the Low German Mennonite women, they still have the problems of child care and transportation. In the case of the Oil and Gas training program, all of the participants got jobs, though not all in the Oil and Gas industry. "I don't know what it's like everywhere else but the Oil and Gas is a really

hard sell for getting Immigrants hired.”

Recommendations

1. Modify other certificate bearing courses to make them more accessible to ESL learners.

Many ESL learners are now in the work force. They don't have time to attend ESL classes prior to getting a job. However, they are still expected to know and abide by all of the Occupational Health and Safety regulations, avail themselves of workplace training and stay up to date on the latest developments in the workplace. More of the training that is presented in the workforce needs to be rewritten, reformatted and restructured to make it more accessible to ESL learners. This will allow them to be contributing involved members of the workforce. It will also ensure that when they are in a course it is at an appropriate level for them and taught with appropriate strategies. In the course of implementing this project, two programs that were mentioned several times by different stakeholders were First Aid and Class 4 Driver's License.

2. Build funding for onsite childcare and transportation into budgets for future programs.

If the target audience for a class is immigrant women, onsite childcare and transportation will be necessary to remove barriers keeping them from attending. Some of these women are very isolated, do not have a social network to share babysitting and have no means of transportation. They will not be able to attend classes if these needs are not met.

3. Provide support for other communities to use the Industry Specific Pre-employment Language Training: Program Development Framework.

Rural communities are being asked more and more often to provide training for local employers. They need a format to follow to set up a program and they need support for the first time they use the format. They need a resource person that they can consult and that can make suggestions for improvement, resources, and strategies. This will give them a tool, the information, the experience and the confidence to be more responsive to their community's needs. They also need the funding to provide the time to develop a program.

Rural Routes – Language Tools & Resources for Local Trainers

Public Report

Advanced Education

Alberta Human Resources & Employment

**Prepared by:
Anna DeLuca
August 2006**

Introduction

Over the past four years NorQuest College has worked with Alberta Advanced Education and Alberta Human Resources and Employment to assist rural communities and smaller urban centres in offering quality and effective ESL training. Projects that have been completed include:

- ◆ the development of an ESL Resource Package for Alberta Communities (ERPAC) – a curriculum and resource package for community instructors and tutors;
- ◆ delivery of ESL workshops targeted at enhancing the knowledge and skills of community instructors and tutors;
- ◆ mentoring services to coordinators and instructors and tutors from the Community Adult Learning Councils (CALC) and Volunteer Tutor Adult Literacy Programs (VTALP).

The latest phase of this assistance was the Rural Routes project (May 2005 to May 2006). Through this project NorQuest College built on the previous work which helped communities develop capacity in meeting the needs of ESL learners. The project included developing ESL materials that reflect the realities of life in smaller urban and rural communities and providing more support for coordinators, instructors and tutors in delivering quality ESL programming.

Project Objectives

- work collaboratively with smaller urban and rural communities to develop support ESL materials in the form of a ‘mini curriculum’
- provide 10 professional development workshops on topics such as
 - ◆ lesson planning
 - ◆ English in the Workplace
 - ◆ resources such as Summative Assessment Manual, Integrating CLB Assessment into your ESL classroom, CLB Can- Do Checklists, Literacy

- Placement Tool, It's Essential website, Relating Canadian Language Benchmarks to Essential Skills: A Comparative Framework)
 - ◆ using Canadian Language Benchmarks
 - ◆ teaching pronunciation
 - ◆ ESL assessment
- update the ESL Resource Package for Alberta Communities (e.g. websites, databases, programs) provide an Itinerant ESL Consultant service to smaller urban and rural communities throughout Alberta
- videostream segments of ESL professional development workshops being delivered in smaller urban and rural communities
- research the feasibility and logistics of the development of an “ESL Help Line” and/or website concept

Project Activities

1. Development of Mini Curriculum (referred to as ESL Modules)

The idea for this project came in response to requests from instructors and tutors for lesson plans related to the ERPAC. The ESL Modules would present ready made lessons for each of 10 topics. Each of the ten topics would have a lesson A and a lesson B at two different Canadian Language Benchmark levels (CLB 2 and CLB 4) and would include extension activities to enable an instructor or tutor to teach to a broader range of levels among their learners.

Many of the topics selected for the modules address settlement issues to meet the needs of newcomers to Canada. However, as many of the learners coming into the programs have been in Canada for a period of time, other topics focus on their needs. The topics for the lessons include:

- First Day with your Class
- What Do You Want To Be & Where Do You Want To Go
- Your Community (two lessons)
- Money Matters (two lessons)
- Canadian Environment (and weather)
- Health
- Being Canadian

The ESL Modules offer a useable model for planning lessons referenced to the CLB. The topics address points that are interesting and relevant for adults. They are constructed around topics or themes and contain appropriate CLB competencies, supporting grammar for the topic, activities and teaching techniques that instructors can transfer to other lessons, suggested resources and extension activities. While the module can be used as is, off the shelf, it is designed to also build competence in instructors and tutors. Its aim is to teach users how to build lesson plans around the CLB competencies and how to use the teaching techniques in other situations.

2. Professional Development Workshops

Over the past three years NorQuest College has been providing professional development in English as a Second Language for Community Adult Learning Councils and the Volunteer Tutor Adult Literacy Programs across Alberta. During the first year the major focus was on introducing the ESL Resource Package for Alberta Communities and the Canadian Language Benchmarks.

Coordinators, instructors and tutors who attended these workshops asked for more training covering many aspects of ESL instruction.

This year each community had particular needs that they wanted addressed. Therefore the workshops directly responded to specific requests for professional development and were tailored to each community's needs. They were delivered between September 2005 and March 2006. The host community usually opened the workshops to coordinators, instructors and tutors from adjoining communities. The majority of participants were coordinators, instructors and tutors from CALC and VTALP programs.

A total of 15 workshops were delivered in the following locations to 173 participants.

- County of Forty Mile (Bow Island)
- Literacy Alberta New Coordinator Training
- Literacy Alberta Coordinator Training
- Taber & District Adult Literacy Program
- Rockyview Adult Literacy Programs
- Write Soon Literacy Society (Whitecourt /Ste. Anne /Woodlands)
- Red Deer STAR Conference
- Fort Saskatchewan Regional Coordinators
- Lethbridge Regional Literacy Coordinators
- Red Deer, Life Long Learning Council
- Jasper Adult Literacy Program
- Medicine Hat College – ABLE, Brooks Campus
- County of Lethbridge Literacy Program
- Peace Adult Literacy (Peace River)
- Lethbridge, Star Literacy Conference

3. Update the ESL Resource Package for Alberta Communities

The ESL Resource Package for Alberta Communities developed in 2003 was revised. Information for instructors was updated and expanded. The grammar scope and sequence chart was revised. The Initial Placement Tool was re-correlated. The resource section was updated with current information on databases, websites and newly-developed materials. The revised issue of ERPAC will be available on the NorQuest College website.

4. Itinerant ESL Consultant Service

Two consultants: one for the north and one for the south of the province provided mentoring services to CALCs and VTALPs as an immediate, individualized response to ESL questions. The requests for assistance and advice came from coordinators, instructors and tutors cover-

ing a wide range of needs. Most commonly the consultants were asked to deliver in-service training to tutors and instructors. Sometimes, there were 5-6 tutors present but more typically 2-3 people came for training. Many wanted advice on dealing with multi-level classes, help with grammar and assessment, or simply someone to bounce ideas off of. Many asked for advice on suitable resources. The consultants carried a range of CLB referenced resources to display on their community visits. They also guided practitioners in using the resources effectively. As the consultants worked more closely with communities they discovered community prepared resources that they then recommended to other communities.

Other examples of the mentoring services provided are:

- ◆ Classroom observation and feedback
- ◆ Research and information about resources
- ◆ Attending staff meetings
- ◆ Suggestions regarding teaching strategies and techniques
- ◆ Discussion around new ESL programs
- ◆ Discussion of professional development needs of new ESL instructors and tutors
- ◆ Research and information about funding issues
- ◆ Assistance with writing proposals
- ◆ Advice on writing ads for new ESL classes

The ESL Itinerant Coach Service involved 34 community visits and provided mentoring to 24 Volunteer Literacy Programs and 16 Community Adult Learning Councils as well as individual service to tutors and instructors. The following locations indicate the communities that received mentoring services.

Airdrie – Athabasca – Barrhead – Bonneyville – Brooks – Bow Island – Camrose – Claresholm – Coaldale – Cold Lake – Drumheller – Edson – Evansburg – Ft. Saskatchewan – Grande Cache – Hanna – High Level – Hinton – Lac La Biche – Literacy Alberta – Lloydminster – Peace River – Provost – Red Deer – St. Albert – St. Paul – Strathmore – Taber – Two Hills – Vegreville – Vermilion – Vulcan – Wainwright – Whitecourt

5. Video Streaming of Workshops

Many smaller communities in Alberta do not have the resources to send their instructors and volunteer tutors to professional development opportunities. Factors that influence this issue include distance from location of the PD, time available for instructors to attend, volunteer turn-over resulting in ongoing training and the lack of funds to cover travel and accommodation expenses. However, the need for professional development in the area of ESL continues to grow. Therefore, it is important to look at different solutions to meet the need for training around ESL delivery. As on-line training continues to become more accessible in rural areas of the province, it is time to look at this as a piece of the solution to professional development.

NorQuest College undertook to develop 3 ESL professional development workshops to be offered as on line training to Alberta communities. They selected three topics for workshops based on those most frequently requested in smaller urban and rural communities.

- ◆ One-on-one instruction
- ◆ Teaching Pronunciation

- ◆ Teaching Strategies

The three workshops will be piloted in the near future via Web CT for coordinators, instructors and tutors to access from their communities.

6. ESL Help Desk/Website Concept

An environmental scan was undertaken to determine interest and/or need of an ESL HELP DESK. Bradley Wells Management Consulting was hired to conduct the study. Twelve interviews were conducted with various stakeholders. The following Help Desk models were examined:

- ◆ Literacy Alberta Help Line
- ◆ AlphaPlus Centre (Ontario based)
- ◆ CAELA (US based)
- ◆ Literacy B.C.

The findings of this preliminary report suggest that an ESL Help Desk that supports practitioners in rural Alberta would be a useful addition to the existing suite of tools available. However, it was made clear that the undertaking of setting up an ESL Help Desk be done with careful and thorough planning and to ensure that sustainable long-term funding would be available for the endeavour. It was also recommended that duplication be avoided and where possible this service be incorporated into existing infrastructure.

Recommendations

1. Provide additional 12-14 professional development ESL workshops on a range of topics such as lesson planning, occupational language, resources, intercultural communication, Canadian Language Benchmarks, pronunciation, and grammar.
2. Expand the ESL mentoring service of the Itinerant Consultant to additional (new) rural and small urban communities throughout Alberta and to continue to provide in-time support to communities with whom we already have a relationship established.
3. Produce a publishable format of two existing workshops.
4. Pilot the three on-line professional development workshops – teaching Pronunciation, One-on-One Instruction, and Teaching Strategies and develop guidelines for creating future on-line workshops based on the feedback from the pilots.
5. Pilot ERPAC mini-modules
6. Create an ESL newsletter providing tips and information around ESL instruction for instructors and tutors in CALC and VTALP programs.
7. Develop marketing material that highlights the services available through the Rural ESL Initiative.
8. Complete a more in-depth feasibility study on the need of a service such as an ESL Help-Desk to support practitioners in rural Alberta.



ATESL Professional Development Bursaries

ATESL members are eligible for bursaries for conferences or courses of study (maximum \$500).

Deadlines for application in 2007 are: March 15, June 15, September 15, and December 15.

To apply, complete the application form at:
http://www.atesl.ca/participate_bursary.html

You are eligible to apply if:

- ◆ You have been a member of ATESL for at least two years
- ◆ You have not received a bursary from ATESL in the past two years
- ◆ Your membership fees are paid in full
- ◆ You plan to return to Alberta after your conference or course of study, if it is outside the province.

Priority will be given to candidates who demonstrate need for financial support.

Successful candidates will agree to provide a written evaluation of the event or course, which may be published in the ATESL Newsletter or web site.



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

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

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