



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.

September 2005

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**ATESL ESL-C
CONFERENCE 2005**

*Connecting Communities,
Honouring Voices!*

2005 ATESL/ESL-C Conference
November 04/05
Chairperson's Report

The 2005 ATESL/ESL-C Conference Planning Committee has been working hard throughout the summer. To date, the hotel and keynote speakers have been booked, along with several publishers. The proposals for presentations/workshops look fabulous and registration is up and running. Please note that the early bird registration deadline is **September 30th**. Posters have been sent to organizations around the province. If you have not received yours, please contact the conference planning committee. To learn more about the conference, go to the ATESL website (<http://www.atesl.ca>).

The Conference Planning Committee is pleased to welcome two prominent educators as our keynote speakers:

Dr. Barbara Burnaby, Dean of the Faculty of Education at Memorial University in Newfoundland, will be speaking on Friday. Dr. Burnaby is currently the Coordinator of the Immigrant and Children Youth Project, which is exploring National Benchmarks for children. She has also been the past president of TESL and World Literacy Canada. Her research interests are language policy in Canada, settlement and immigration, literacy and teaching ESL in the workplace.

Dr. Sylvia Helmer, currently ESL Consultant for the Vancouver School District and instructor at the University of British Columbia, began her love affair with ESL as a young immigrant to Canada. Learning the English language, content and culture was only the first step. In her teaching she aspires to learn constantly and in the company of an infinite variety of co-learners. To date, covering some 30 years of teaching and learning, this has included students of all ages and in several countries of the South Pacific, rural settings in Northern British Columbia as well as the diversity of learners in both the public school system and the universities of the Greater Vancouver area.

Sylvia's Ph.D. research culminated in a longitudinal study that focused on the efforts of ESL specialists in secondary schools to work collaboratively with their content-area colleagues. Her MA work in cross-cultural communication and how it impacts teaching and learning resulted in her co-authored book, *Look at Me When I Talk to You: ESL Learners in Non-ESL Classrooms*, which is now in its second edition.

The Conference Planning Committee is looking forward to the 2005 ATESL/ESL-C Conference: *Connecting Communities: Honouring Voices*. We hope to see you there!

Conference Co-Chairs,

Adriana Bejko, Lesley Dudley,

Anne O-Byrne and Dora Foscolos

ATESL Professional Development Bursaries

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

Deadlines for application in 2005 are: March 15, June 15, September 15, and December 15.

Apply now by completing the official application form:

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 website.

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

TESL CANADA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TESL Canada is a 26-year-old national professional not-for-profit organization for Administrators and Teachers of English as a Second Language. Its mandate is to advance communication and coordinate awareness of issues for those involved with English as a second language and English skills development.

Effective October 15th, 2005, TESL Canada is seeking a full time Executive Director who is responsible to a Board of Directors and works closely with the President in all matters.

The position requires

- management skills in the not-for-profit sector, including supervisory experience working with office personnel and contract personnel
- financial management and budgeting skills
- fundraising and grant writing experience
- experience working with a volunteer board of directors, committees and like-minded organizations
- some travel is involved

The applicant must also be self-motivated, demonstrate administration and computer skills, be able to work independently and interact with provincial counterparts. Knowledge of the TESL/TEFL or settlement sector would be a definite asset.

National office location is to be determined. Salary is commensurate with qualifications and experience.

Candidates should send a resumé by September 1, 2005 to

**TESL Canada
Executive Director Search Committee
P.O. Box 44105
Burnaby, B.C. V5B 4Y2
or email:
admin@tesl.ca**

PASSAGES TO CANADA – TELLING CANADA’S STORY OF IMMIGRATION

High school and ESL/FSL educators across the country are exploring the human dimension of immigration with their students through *Passages to Canada*, a free storytelling program offered by the Dominion Institute in collaboration with Citizenship & Immigration Canada and the Department of Canadian Heritage.

The *Passages to Canada* Speakers’ Bureau is a diverse group of immigrants and refugees who have been selected to share their stories of coming to Canada with youth and second-language learners. The Calgary Bureau of the program includes the Chair of the Calgary Board of Education Teresa Woo-Paw and MP Deepak Obhrai, as well as artists, educators, businesspeople and community workers. All members participate on a volunteer basis and visit with local schools to talk about where they came from, why they chose Canada, how they felt when they first arrived and when they first felt that Canada could be their home.

The program offers free resources for teachers including the School & Community Group Resource Guide, which contains suggestions for classroom activities surrounding a visit. Educators outside of the Speakers’ Bureau catchment areas may also order a videotaped event featuring three speakers sharing their stories with a studio audience of ESL students.

Events can be arranged at any time during the year, either according to curriculum or as an opportunity to mark key dates, such as Citizenship Week (third week in October), Human Rights Day (December 10) or International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (March 21).

A new component of the program is the *Passages to Canada* Digital Archive, a unique multimedia collection that chronicles Canada’s immigration story. The Archive contains multilingual interviews and immigration memorabilia including photographs, traditional art and dress, letters, recipes and personal mementos from each speaker’s journey to Canada.

The *Passages to Canada* program offers a unique opportunity for ESL students, many of whom are immigrants themselves, to hear from those who have experienced similar kinds of obstacles.

For more information and to view speaker profiles and the Digital Archive, visit the program website at <http://www.passagestocanada.com>, email passages@dominion.ca, or call the Dominion Institute at 1-866-701-1867.

The Dominion Institute is a nationally registered charity dedicated to promoting awareness of Canadian history, identity and democracy.

UPDATE on CCLB Activities

Pat Meek, Test development Coordinator, cclb

Over the past year, the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB) has been working on several projects to increase the resources available to conduct CLB assessments. Two new versions of the **CLBPT** (Forms 2 and 3) are available and orientation sessions for certified assessors will begin in August 2005. An employment-related version (Form 4) was piloted in Alberta colleges and should be ready for distribution by the fall.

A **communicative assessment tool to assess higher-level language proficiencies (CLB 7 -10)** for placement of clients into workforce-related training programs is near completion. Piloting involved clients with post-secondary education and some work experience who are seeking training to access the Canadian workforce. The tool will assess clients in less than 90 minutes and provide scores for each language skill.

Phase 1 of a project to develop a **companion document to the CLB 2000** continues. The benchmarks have been reformatted into concise tables which provide an overview of key CLB content. It is to facilitate use of the CLB 2000 for activities such as task selection and development, assessment development and test alignment activities. The tables will undergo a validation process over the summer to establish their usefulness for the intended purpose and audiences. Phase 2 would see the reformatted tables become the key piece in guidelines to inform all future CLB test and task development and related activities.

The CCLB has developed a ***Literacy Placement Tool (LPT)*** aligned to the literacy benchmarks. The new resource will facilitate placement of ESL learners into literacy training programs. ESL and LINC assessors and practitioners participated in a national validation process along with over one hundred literacy learners. In a streamlined one-on-one assessment procedure, the LPT identifies learners whose skills and strategies reflect CLB Foundations and Phase 1 literacy competencies.

In partnership with the Centre for Education and Training at the Peel District School Board, the CCLB is developing an on-line self-assessment tool aligned to CLB levels 1 – 10. It will provide immigrants and prospective immigrants with the option of self-assessment of their second language proficiency to better inform decisions related to: employment; further education and training; immigration, and readiness for higher-stakes test-taking. The tool will also provide a body of supporting information about the CLB and how they apply to various Canadian contexts. The tool will be launched as a key feature of the Citizenship and Immigration Canada “Welcome to Canada” portal. For further information about these projects, check the CCLB website at <http://www.language.ca> or contact the Centre at (613) 230-7729.

The iBT: A TOEFL for the Next Generation

Greg Sowak
Associate Coordinator,
MacEwan English Language Institute

Over a year ago, Educational Testing Services (ETS), TOEFL's parent company, announced the coming of a "Next Generation" TOEFL in fall 2005. Unlike 1998, when the computer-based TOEFL (CBT) was unceremoniously sprung on unsuspecting instructors, program planners and publishers, this time ETS has sought to be graciously proactive. They have inundated us with e-mail announcements, shamelessly pedaled on-line preparatory resources, and even delivered workshops all over North America for ESL instructors and administrators. These one-day workshops are intended to provide a detailed overview of the latest incarnation of TOEFL, the internet-based "iBT", slated to be launched in Canada in late-October 2005.

In the spring, I had the opportunity to travel to Vancouver and attend one of these workshops. This article shares what I learned and provides a general overview of the new iBT. For the more intrepid, it provides a section by section summary and analysis. I think you will find that the iBT is a much different, and even more challenging, testing instrument than past TOEFLs.

The iBT TOEFL: Global Changes

When compared with paper-based (PBT) and computer-based (CBT) versions, the most significant changes to iBT include the addition of a speaking section and the removal of a discrete structure (grammar) section. It also includes an "integrated" testing approach, a new medium of delivery, new scheduling, a new scoring system, and a change in cost.

From language teaching and admissions perspectives, by far the most important change is the addition of a speaking assessment, which will account for 25% of a learner's score. As with other "integrated" English language assessments, tasks on the iBT speaking test will require candidates to gather information from a variety of media (listen to a lecture and read a short article on the same topic), compare and contrast the information, paraphrase it, or synthesize it, and summarize key points in a short oral response. Learners will be allowed to take notes as they prepare their answers; final responses are recorded with internet-based software and submitted electronically to ETS for evaluation.

If TOEFL candidates are uneasy with the prospect of a speaking assessment, they may be equally disenchanted by the removal of the discrete Structure section. The 300-page multiple-choice "grammar practice activity" TOEFL preparation books which have served as the hallmark of test preparation activity for so many students will now be useless. Thankfully, on the "Next Generation" exam, "Structure" will be assessed in the Speaking and Writing

sections using new evaluation rubrics that integrate grammar into the scoring schema. “Integration” is definitely the buzz word surrounding the new iBT. Though certainly not a cutting edge concept in the realm of language assessment, “integration” marks a drastic and refreshing departure from PBT and CBT TOEFLs, which tended to be segregated and passive instruments. The iBT Writing and Speaking sections will both have integrated components which, as mentioned, require learners to collect information from listening and reading samples and prepare responses. In order to succeed on these integrated tasks, learners will need to effectively summarize, paraphrase, compare and contrast, understand inference, and identify tone and purpose. Clearly, these challenging new tasks promise to test both language and cognitive skills.

Finally, the new iBT comes with an assortment of significant “mechanical” changes. First and foremost is the internet-based delivery medium. Though the iBT Listening and Reading sections will look very similar to those on the CBT, learners will have to be relatively computer ‘savvy’ for the Speaking and Writing sections. They will be required to word process their essays and use microphones to record oral responses. Both will be submitted for evaluation electronically. In addition, the iBT comes with a new scoring mechanism. Just as we were finally becoming proficient in the language of CBT, we will now have to cope with a new scale that awards a maximum of 30 points per section, for a total of 120. Because speaking has never before been assessed on TOEFL, ETS warns that iBT scores will not neatly correlate with CBT and PBT scores, posing a major challenge for post-secondary institutions as they scramble to set iBT admissions standards.

In terms of delivery, ETS reports that the iBT will be offered only 30-40 times per year and that the cost of iBT will be *less* than the cost of the CBT. It is reported that the iBT will be only \$140 (US) in 2005. In addition, the iBT will be delivered only at “official TOEFL test centers”. Indeed, any institution with a decent computer lab can now apply to be one of these centers. There will be an inspection and selection process, but the mandate seems to be one of accessibility.

The iBT TOEFL: Section by Section

In addition to other global changes, the sections on the iBT will be delivered in a new order: Reading, Listening, Speaking, Writing. The full examination will reportedly last about 4 hours; learners will be allowed to have a short break after the listening section. Below is a detailed account of what learners can expect when challenging the iBT.

· Reading Comprehension

As mentioned, the iBT reading section will look very similar to that on current CBT examinations. The content of the reading selections will continue to be strictly “academic”, with topics from liberal arts and science, ranging from American History to Zoology. Questions will still be predominantly multiple choice, and students will still be asked to identify main idea, inference, and vocabulary meaning and to skim and scan for details.

However, the iBT promises to have slightly longer reading passages and several new ques-

tion types. Learners will face 3 to 5 passages, each approximately 700 words and followed by 12-14 questions. Each set of questions will have to be completed in 20 minutes. Of the new question types, the most noteworthy are the “reading to learn” questions that will ask students to identify organization, to distinguish between major and minor points and, most challenging of all, to recognize accurate paraphrase. These questions will be answered by completing charts and summaries.

Mechanical changes include the addition of glossary and review features. The reading section of the iBT will have a total maximum score of 30 points.

· **Listening Comprehension**

Like the reading section, iBT listening comprehension will be similar to CBT listening comprehension. Learners will still listen while watching a “slide show” of images and will still answer questions at the conclusion of each listening. The major change here is the removal of the 10-15 second dialogues which discretely tested for idioms, commonly confused words and agreement/disagreement. Another welcome amendment: students will now be allowed to take notes as they listen, authenticating the exercise.

The iBT listening section will comprise 4 - 6 lectures of 3 to 5 minutes each, some with classroom discussion; there will also be 2 - 3 conversations with 2 or more speakers, each lasting approximately 3 minutes and having 12 to 25 verbal exchanges. The lectures will be followed by 6 questions and the conversations will be followed by 5 questions. ETS reports that there will be 3 question types: basic understanding, connecting information, and pragmatic understanding. Of the 3, the latter are new and will pose the greatest challenge; learners will need to be able to recognize a speaker’s attitude, degree of certainty, purpose or motivation. The iBT listening will still be predominantly multiple choice, but new chart completion and matching tasks have been introduced.

Topics on the listening section will be similar to those in the reading section. Lecturers will discuss academic topics from arts and science, and the conversations will be largely based on campus life; groups of students and professors will talk about everything from missed classes and assignments to library policies. ETS promises that the voices on iBT will represent a variety of English accents.

The listening section will last a total of 60 to 90 minutes and will be scored out of 30 points.

· **Speaking**

The new iBT speaking section will have a total of 6 tasks: 2 “independent” tasks about familiar topics and 4 “integrated” tasks. The independent tasks look very similar to past Test of Spoken English (TSE) questions, as responses are opinions based wholly on personal experience. For example, learners will need to defend a personal choice or preference with specific details and examples. For these independent tasks, learners will have 15 seconds to prepare an answer and a maximum of 45 seconds to respond.

The integrated tasks are considerably more involved. There will be 2 reading/listening/speaking tasks and 2 listening/speaking tasks. In the former, learners will read passages, listen to lectures on the same topic, and be required to summarize and explain information from both; they will have 30 seconds to prepare their answers and a maximum of 1 minute to respond. In the latter, learners will listen to 2 conversations and will be required to provide a summary of one conversation and propose a solution to a problem discussed in the second; they will have 20 seconds to prepare and 1 minute to respond for each. These integrated speaking tasks will have both classroom and campus based topics.

As mentioned, learners' responses will be recorded on internet-based software and submitted electronically for evaluation to the ETS scoring network. ETS has devised new evaluation rubrics, one for independent tasks and one for integrated tasks, which are both based on a 4 point grading schema. Learners will be assessed by human raters for "delivery", which includes pace, fluidity, intelligibility, "language use", which includes grammar and vocabulary, and "topic development".

Scores from 0-4 are converted to a scaled section score out of 30. The entire speaking section takes only 20 minutes.

· **Writing**

Like the speaking section, iBT Writing will have an "independent" and an "integrated" task. The integrated task, definitely the more challenging of the two, will appear first on the exam and will require students to read a short passage (230 – 300 words) in 3 minutes and listen to a speaker discussing the same topic for 2 minutes. Students will need to write a response of 150 - 225 words or more in 20 minutes. Note taking is allowed. As mentioned previously, the question will ask students to summarize, compare, contrast or possibly comment on tone and purpose. One of the sample questions I viewed asked students to summarize points made in a lecture and explain how they "cast doubt" on points made in a related reading.

Fortunately for learners, the "independent" tasks are less rigorous. Highly similar to the Test of Written English (TWE), students will need to write an essay that states, explains and supports an opinion on an issue. According to ETS, an effective essay will be approximately 300 words. As on the TWE, topics will ask students to agree/disagree, make a choice, or possibly compare and contrast. They will have 30 minutes to prepare, write and revise.

Both writing samples will need to be word processed—handwriting is no longer an option—and submitted to the ETS scoring network. Essays will be assessed by 2 raters according to new scoring rubrics and the learner will be awarded an average score. The independent and integrated rubrics are slightly different, but both are based on 0-5 point schema. Scores of 0-5 are then converted into a 30 point section score.

Conclusion

Clearly, the “Next Generation” iBT TOEFL is a considerably different and substantially better examination when compared with the PBT and CBT versions. Like CAEL (Canadian Academic English Language Assessment), the iBT looks to be a more authentic tool that will more accurately and completely assess learners’ English language and academic skills. Presumably, only those students who are genuinely well prepared for the rigors of studying in an English speaking post-secondary environment will pass iBT. Time, of course, will tell us more about this Next Generation.

Do Students Learn From Feedback? An Inquiry into teacher and student perceptions

A Presentation at the TESL Canada Conference 2005

Nassim Kanani & Margaret Kersten

Introduction:

Giving and receiving feedback is an important factor in the process of teaching and learning. Teachers have always been concerned about marking the students’ paper in a faster and at the same time the most effective way. There is almost enough evidence about the effectiveness of feedback on ESL writing in literature. Most studies have resulted in the usefulness of feedback in general and the fact that the students, receiving feedback improve in writing accuracy overtime (Ferris & Roberts, 2001). As mentioned by Ferris and Roberts (2001) in some studies, researchers have found statistically significant improvement in students writing as a result of feedback on their errors (Chandler, 2000; Ferris, 1995a, 1997; Ferris et al., 2000; Frantzen, 1995; Lalande, 1982; Ronn, Ross, & Sheppard, 1992).

Providing feedback on student writing is individualized attention to each student, which is rarely possible in a normal classroom environment. Written feedback is considered as “informational, challenging reaction” and suggestions to improve writing. It also has the potential to create a supportive learning and teaching environment (Hyland & Hyland, 2001). Robb et al. (1986) did a research to find out how much explicit the feedback should be. They found no significant differences in writing improvement by the students who were having direct feedback, encoded in-text feedback, uncoded in-text feedback, and marginal feedback stating the number of the errors per line. They came to the conclusion that it is sufficient if the teachers just direct the students’ attention to the errors (Ferris & Roberts, 2001). According to Ferris & Roberts (2001) there is not much evidence about the level of explicitness of feedback. Do the teachers have to indicate the type of error the students have made or is it enough to simply mark an erroneous form and leave it to the students to figure it out by themselves? A study by Ferris et al., (2000) has provided evidence that the subjects were nearly successful in self-editing errors in both situations where they were marked but not coded for a specific error, and where there were specific indications. Ferris and Roberts

(2001) also mention that in an experimental study performed by Fathman *and Whalley* (1990), they found out that the students who received error feedback had fewer grammatical errors in a revised draft than the ones who received only content feedback or no feedback at all. Second language theorists believe that most students prefer indirect feedback as it engages them in “guided learning and problem solving” (Lalande, 1982) and they can figure out the correct form by themselves and learn better. Some researchers have reported that indirect feedback helps the students to improve their accuracy in writing overtime more than direct feedback does (Ferris & Roberts, 2001). According to Ferris & Roberts’ (2001) study there were no significant differences between the students who received coded feedback and those who simply received underlines for errors. It seems enough for the students that the teacher gives them hint to understand they had errors and then they can self-edit their papers successfully.

As Rob et al. (1986) reported the students attend feedback when they are forced to approach error correction as a problem solving activity. According to Lalande’s (1982) study it was found out that overt correction of student writing is not a useful way of giving feedback. The students who received an error code did significantly better than those who received corrections from teacher (Enginarlar, 1993).

Hyland & Hyland (2001) refer that some studies suggest when giving feedback some teachers look for what is done poorly and focus their feedback on the negative parts of the writing. According to Taylor & Hoedt (1966) and Gee (1972) there is no significant difference in the quality of writing of the students receiving either negative or positive feedback; yet, they did find that negative feedback could sometimes detriment their motivation and self-esteem. However praise should be informative and sincere (Brophy, 1981) not to spoil the students.

In this paper I will refer to the case study that I have done to find out the students’ and the teacher’s idea about the current feedback. The research questions were as follows:

- 1) What does the teacher mostly focus on in providing feedback? Does it match with the students’ expectations?
- 2) What strategies does the teacher use in giving feedback? Are they useful for the students?
- 3) How do the students feel about the feedback given by the teacher? What are their preferences? Are they satisfied with the current feedback?
- 4) Does the teacher try to draw the students’ attention to feedback?

The Research Design

Participants

The teacher whose class I observed for my research is an experienced teacher and has taught the writing course several times. She agreed to be interviewed about feedback. The students were all EFL students and 9 of them allowed me to look at their marked papers and 2 of them volunteered to be interviewed about feedback. The first interviewee was a Chi-

nese boy who has been in Canada for almost a year and the other was a Russian girl who has been in Canada for almost 3 years; they are both learning English to study at Carleton University.

Methodology

I observed a 1300 ESL writing course at Carleton University. The teacher is a very experienced teacher and has taught this course several times. I observed her class for two sessions to become familiar with the dynamics of the class and create a kind of rapport with the students. During the first session I explained to the students what I intended to do and asked for their cooperation.

In this course they had to write many summaries, I collected some of them and took notes on the teacher's comments. Then I arranged a time with the teacher to interview her about the feedback she had provided for the students on those summaries and essays. I also asked for guidance about the kind of questions I should ask the students to get something useful out of this case study. The interview was tape-recorded, I transcribed the interview and added some questions to the ones I wanted to ask the students and then interviewed the two students individually.

Teacher interview

The interview questions intended to obtain the teacher's idea about the categories of feedback offered (content, grammar, organization, mechanics, etc.), the utility of feedback for the students, the role of feedback in learning, the ways of providing feedback (signaling, coding, explanation, margin notes, and others), and the students reaction to feedback in general. This instrument meant to reveal the teacher's idea about what she considered important when providing feedback on student writing.

Student interview.

The interview questions intended to find out the students perception about the applicability of feedback, the kind of feedback preferred, the amount of feedback, reflection on feedback, sufficiency of feedback given by the teacher, explicitness of feedback, and rubric.

Data Collection

All the feedback on the writing assignments was carefully documented and categorized. There were 9 pieces of work written by 9 different students, marked by the teacher without knowing they will be used for a case study. The teacher and student interviews (see Appendix A & B) were transcribed carefully and the gist of each was written on a separate piece of paper. To ensure content validity, the notes about each participant's interview were emailed to him/her and the participants were asked to check if their comments were appropriately recorded; this was done to minimize misrepresentation and misunderstanding.

Results

The total number of the feedback provided on the 9 papers was 247. Based on my own inter-

pretation I categorized the feedback into 6 different categories. The categories are signaling, suggestions, criticism, correction, and praise. The suggestion, criticism, and praise categories were taken from Hyland & Hyland's (2001) case study. The signaling includes underline, double underline, circling, crossing, ^, and question mark. The suggestions include remarks made as reminders; such as "source", "explain more", "examples missing", "other concepts?", "title", and other similar remarks. Criticism includes remarks like "not clear", "a bit disconnected", "poor", "it's like a shopping list!", "confusing", etc. Corrections include signaling and providing the correct form on top of the wrong point. Praise includes remarks intended to encourage the students; such as "interesting", "good", "good point", and other positive remarks. All the feedback is the in-text comments given by the teacher throughout each paper. According to Table 1, the order of the frequency of the feedback used by the teacher is signaling, suggestions, criticism, correction, and praise.

Table 1: Teachers use of feedback

| Signals | Suggestions | Criticism | Correction | Praise | Overall |
|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 171 (69.2%) | 24 (9.7%) | 22(8.9%) | 21(8.5%) | 9(3.7%) | 247 |

The teacher also provides overall feedback at the end of each paper, usually in two categories: strengths and suggestions for improvement. The instruction is content based, that's why the teacher mostly gives feedback on content and organization. She also gives feedback on form when there is a major problem that might change the meaning or when the whole structure is wrong. She mostly uses signaling to point out a specific kind of problem, (see Table 2).

Table 2: the meaning of the signals.

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Crossing | When something should not be there |
| Underline | Wrong word, ending, grammatical point |
| Double Underline | Spelling problem |
| ^ | Something is missing |

She hopes that the comments written on the student paper begin a conversation between the student and the teacher at which point the teacher can provide better explanation; she thinks that many students learn better when the teacher explains a problem orally. This paper focused on the teacher and students perception of the feedback. There is the summary of the responses to the research questions. The teacher reported focusing mostly on content and organization feedback, since the most important thing for the students to learn at this level is logical reasoning. She also draws the students' attention to the major grammar problems existing in their papers. This idea agrees with those in literature suggesting that the feedback on content alone does not help the students improve their writing, it should be accompanied by some feedback on grammar as well (Fathman and Whalley, 1990 as cited in Ferris and Roberts, 2001). The teacher does not give as much as comment or feedback that she could, the reason is that she does not want to overwhelm the students with comments. She might overlook the problems that do not interfere with communicating the idea, because the students might not read the comments if there are too many comments, signaling, margin notes, etc. She is concerned about the students' learning and tries to give them whatever they

need to learn. She also tries to encourage them to attend the feedback by giving 15 minutes after submitting the papers to them, asking them to free write about the feedback, and the mid-term papers described by the teacher. She believes that if the students attend the feedback it will help them improve their writing. She is aware of the probability that some students do not attend the feedback and do not benefit from it. When looking at the comments given by the teacher and comparing them to her perception of providing feedback.

The students in general accept the fact that feedback plays a role in helping them improve their writing. At this level the students are learning English for academic purpose, then they will try to get the best of it. As a matter of fact the students want to know whenever they make a mistake and it is very important that they do not expect the teacher to provide the correct form for them; they consider feedback as a problem-solving activity (Enginarlar, 1993). The students' expectation of feedback and the way and points the teacher provides feedback on, are in line with each other therefore it seems that there is a match between the students' expectation and the teacher's intention.

Conclusion

In this small case study there was almost good fit between the feedback given by the teacher and the feedback expected by the students. The fit was excellent regarding comments on content; for the students the most important thing they wanted comment on was content and as the teacher mentioned providing feedback on content was her first priority. Students' expectation about positive and negative feedback was the same intended by the teacher; they did not look for positive feedback and the teacher also did not give insincere positive feedback on their papers. The fit regarding signaling grammar problems just to indicate an existing problem was excellent. In general there was a relatively good fit among the teacher's intention and students' expectation except for the teacher's intention of not giving explicit feedback; she was hoping that not giving detailed and explicit feedback would start a conversation between her and the students, which did not happen very often. Of course this turned out to be a privilege for the students that thought not having explicit and detailed feedback makes them to figure out the problems by themselves.

The teacher's report about giving feedback was in line with what she actually did on the students' papers. She tried not to bombard them with marking every mistake; instead she just gave the students a hint and left the rest to themselves (encouraging them to ask her if they could not figure it out).

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***Industry Specific
Pre-employment
Language Development
for Immigrants in Rural Alberta Communities -
Phase One***

Public Report

**Submitted by:
Bow Valley College**

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Alberta Learning/Alberta Human Resources and Em-
ployment, Language Training Program**

Project Background

This project evolved out of an earlier project, also funded by Alberta Learning, delivered in partnership by Bow Valley College and NorQuest College. The first project, which included the development of ERPAC (ESL Resource Package for Alberta Communities), involved mentoring two rural Alberta communities. While the consultants were working with these communities they discovered that often immigrants come to a community because of available jobs. However, the job that originally attracted them was not necessarily something they wanted for long-term employment. Once they got settled they started to search for other, more satisfying employment. They often found that they were limited by their lack of English language skills. In an effort to find both work and English language training they migrated to larger urban centres.

At the same time, industries in less densely populated areas often have a need for an increased labour pool. However, because of training needs and safety issues many of these jobs require a certain level of competency in the English language. Employers would like to hire immigrants but find the communication and safety issues prohibit them from doing so.

Rural communities also want to encourage immigrants to stay. They need population growth to maintain their economy, increase their taxation base and fill their schools. But they realize that in order to keep immigrants in their communities they must meet their needs for language training and employment.

The development of Industry Specific Pre-Employment Language Training is an attempt to build bridges between these three groups. It hopes to enable immigrants to acquire the language training they need to obtain jobs and stay in rural communities; provide a competent labour pool for rural industries; and support interested ESL providers in addressing their community's language training programs themselves.

Project Objectives and Findings

Research available current information and document key industries in communities that have substantial immigrant numbers in rural Alberta.

To identify rural communities with significant immigrant populations three methods were used: e-mail questionnaires, telephone interviews and web searches.

Findings:

The results of this research showing communities that have immigrant populations can be seen in the table below:

| Northern Alberta | Central Alberta | Southern Alberta |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Westlock | Vegreville | County of Lethbridge |
| Cold Lake | Lloydminster | Brooks |
| High Level | Oyen | Medicine Hat |
| La Crete | Three Hills | Vulcan |
| Fort Vermilion | Red Deer | Taber |
| | Rocky Mountain House | Crowsnest Pass |
| | Bow Corridor | Cardston |
| | County of Rockview | Claresholm |
| | County of Wheatland | |
| | Elk Point | |
| | Two Hills | |
| | Vermilion | |
| | Jasper | |
| | Edson | |
| | Evansburg | |

Central Alberta has many communities that have immigrants. However, southern Alberta has a denser immigrant population due to the influx of Low German Mennonites in this area.

The research with communities showed that agriculture, manufacturing and oil and gas were the main employers in many of the areas with immigrants.

Further web based research using the Alberta First.com website at <http://www.albertafirst.com/> showed that every region has business and community services and retail and whole-sale as its largest occupational groups. However, employment in these areas requires a high level of language ability so they would not be an option for immigrants with limited language skills. The next largest occupational group is agriculture. This industry already employs many immigrants. The next largest employer in these areas is manufacturing. Based on these findings the consultant decided to focus on southern Alberta.

Find out which industries could/would employ immigrants if they had the appropriate language skills.

The identification of key contact people for industries and communities was made through web search and telephone calls. The consultant developed a guided interview for a telephone survey with industry and community contacts. The initial contact for communities was their employment agency or Chamber of Commerce. These provided industry contacts for manufacturing, trucking and oil and gas. The consultant conducted telephone surveys with a total of four manufacturing companies, three trucking companies, three oil and gas support companies and one oil and gas safety training company. The information regarding job requirements for each industry was also verified by analyzing job listings on <http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/>

Findings:

The manufacturing companies all indicated an interest in hiring immigrants if they had adequate communication skills and a prior knowledge of the industry. Some of them used Grade 12 as a minimum requirement but indicated that industry knowledge would be taken into account.

Most of the trucking companies also expressed interest in hiring immigrants. However, they also required additional certification in such areas as Transportation of Dangerous Goods, Class 1 Driver's License, Safety certification, H2S training, WHMIS and First Aid. These additional training courses would not be covered under the scope of this project. One company said they have had a lot of problems, such as fires and major accidents with new drivers and will only hire experienced people now. The Oil and Gas support industry was reluctant to hire anyone who was not proficient in English. Safety is a huge issue and employees must be trained and be able to react quickly in times of danger. The training company said the courses people need to work in the oil fields are WHMIS, TDG, Detection & Control of Flammable Substances, Confined Space Entry & Rescue, Standard First Aid, H2S Alive, Safe Trenching, Excavating & Ground Disturbance. She said that although they have trained ESL learners in the past, she didn't know if just having this training would ensure people would be considered for a job because the high safety needs really require a good working ability in English. The trainees must understand the safety issues and be able to react and communicate well with others.

After considering the extra training that would be needed for employees in both trucking and oil and gas support services, the consultant decided to pursue manufacturing. Since southern Alberta has a large number of Food Processing Plants this is the sector that was selected for further investigation.

Select a focus industry. This would be an industry which appears willing to employ

immigrants and that has jobs attainable through language development and doesn't necessarily require other training.

Further research on the Food Processing industry confirmed that it would be a viable selection for this project. Information from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development Directory 2004 indicates that in southern Alberta alone there are over sixty food processors. Alberta Careers Update 2003 lists Alberta's food and beverage processing industry as the province's largest manufacturing sector and states that it accounts for about one-quarter of all manufacturing in the province. It employed about 25,000 people in 2003 and employment growth in this industry is expected to be about 1.9 per cent each year from 2003 to 2008. Food Processing also met the criteria in that there are a significant number of employers where there are a significant number of immigrants.

Findings:

The food processing industry is a viable target industry to pilot this project. While other certificate training would certainly enhance employability in the food processing industry it wasn't a requirement. Most organizations were more concerned with employees having the language skills to access training and to be able to communicate at work. They would also like to be able to promote from within their organization. Their employees must have the language skills to be trainable. These are needs that can be addressed through this training program.

Conduct a needs assessment of the language needs, vocabulary, workplace documentation and employment expectations of the focus industry.

An advisory committee was set up which included three members of the Food Processing Industry. Meetings were held with these people to gather information on employment expectations and language needs for the industry.

Agricore, Lamb-Weston and Lucerne participated in a needs assessment of the language needs, vocabulary, workplace document and employment expectations of their industry.

The consultant conducted in person interviews with two managers, two supervisors and toured two plants. She had two telephone interviews with another supervisor. She also toured two plants and collected workplace documentation from both plants.

To gather material from the front-line employees' point of view she accessed information from two previous needs assessments conducted with Lucerne, Calgary and Weston's Bakeries Limited, Calgary. A valuable source of information was the Essential Skills Profile for Labourer (Food Processing Facility) NOC 9617

Use the data from the Needs Assessment to develop a framework/process model for developing an ESL curriculum for pre-employment for a range of industries. The curriculum will be referenced to the Canadian Language Benchmarks but will use industry specific language, documents and work situations. It will also address employability skills such as Canadian workplace expectations, filling in application

forms, resumes, interview skills.

Besides the data from the needs assessment, the main resources for designing the framework were the Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000 and The Essential Skills Profile for Labourer (Food Processing Facility) NOC 9617. Several websites were also invaluable sources of information.

Research from all of the above sources led to the decision to include the following topics in the curriculum framework.

- Industry Profile
- Canadian Workforce Expectations
- Workplace Documents
- Health and Safety
- Personal Protective Equipment
- WHMIS
- Industry Specific Training (training that includes specific vocabulary, work on specific types of machinery, certain types of legislation)
- Standard Operating Procedures
- Hierarchy of the Workplace
- On the Job Communication
- Job Search
- Job Applications

The framework/process model developed is presented as a separate document, *Industry Specific Pre-employment Language Training: Program Development Framework*

Use the framework/process model to develop a curriculum for the focus industry.

Once the framework was developed, its usability was tested by adapting it to the Food Processing Industry. The outline for the modules was followed but they were tailored to the Food Processing Industry. Resources such as documentation, training programs, and safety materials were found that are used in the Food Processing Industry. Since this program is targeted at a level consistent with the Canadian Language Benchmarks 3 and 4, the Benchmarks were a guide in outlining the language competencies that would be addressed. Competencies from the four language strands: listening, speaking, reading and writing were all included. The essential skills profile Labourer (Food Processing Facility) NOC 9617 was also a guideline. It states that the most important essential skills for a labourer in a food processing facility are document use, numeracy, problem solving, and job task planning and organizing. These skills also needed to be addressed in the modules of the curriculum.

The curriculum consists of an instructor's guide and a participant's guide. They are both organized by topic and coordinated to each other. These documents are also presented under separate cover.

Recommendations

The framework and curriculum developed are valuable tools to help community organizations, such as the Community Adult Learning Councils, enhance their capacity to meet their population's needs and form partnerships with local industries. To ensure that these tools are used and supported in rural communities the following recommendations are made.

1. Pilot the Pre-employment Language Training Program for the Food Processing Industry.

Test the applicability of the Pre-employment Language Training Program for the Food Processing Industry by piloting it in an area where there are enough food processors to reap the benefit of an emerging workforce. This also needs to be in an area that has a significant number of ESL learners who cannot access other jobs because of their lack of English skills. The research conducted in this project indicates that southern Alberta is an appropriate location for piloting the program. While the program is being administered, Bow Valley College proposes to provide support in creating liaisons and partnerships with local food processors and to provide professional development to the course instructors.

2. Pilot the Framework for the Industry Specific Pre-employment Language Training Program.

It is expected that someone experienced in ESL instruction should be able to devise a specific curriculum. However, most of the rural communities in Alberta do not have experienced ESL providers. ESL is still a relatively new phenomenon in these communities. Yet, it is these rural communities that need to provide industry specific training to support both their immigrants and their industry. This framework is to help them create a curriculum but it needs to be piloted to see if it is comprehensive enough to be of use. Bow Valley College proposes to provide support to a community while they implement the framework to discover their community needs, develop a curriculum and run a program. Once a community has experience following this procedure they will be able to adapt it to other industries as their community needs change.

3. Redevelop training such as H2S Alive, First Aid, Transportation of Dangerous Goods and Confined Space Entry and Rescue to make it more accessible to ESL learners.

Because many industries also require certification in areas such as forklift operation, safety training, H2S Alive, Confined Space Entry and Rescue, Transportation of Dangerous Goods, Detection & Control of Flammable Substances, Safe Trenching, Excavating & Ground Disturbance, these would be good adjuncts to the pre-employment training program. It is suggested that these certifications could be more effectively learned and acquired if the training programs were redeveloped to make them more accessible to ESL learners. Having the pre-employment language training program plus certification in the above areas would greatly expand employment opportunities for immigrants.

Conclusion

It is hoped that this project will be a valuable resource for immigrants, industry, and community ESL providers. It has the potential to engender partnerships within a community between providers such as Community Adult Learning Councils and the businesses that need an increased labour pool. Also, it will provide immigrants with the language training they need to obtain and keep jobs and encourage them to settle in smaller communities outside of the urban centres.

The framework encourages CALC's to have a deeper understanding of their community, its people and its business needs. Its aim is to build capacity in a community by providing support for ESL providers to meet community needs. It will improve the quality of instruction and also allow community providers to stretch into areas they may not have previously ventured. It also provides a vehicle for businesses to become more involved with the community organization and create a partnership that can help address their labour pool requirements. Initially funding will be required to get these programs started in a community but it is hoped that, as industry sees the benefit of them, it will be willing to subsidize them.

The curriculum for language training for the food processing industry is targeted at a specific area and a specific population in Alberta. It is envisioned that it will fill a need and provide both employment for currently unemployed or under employed immigrants, and an increased labour pool for the food processing industry.

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