

# The ATESL Newsletter

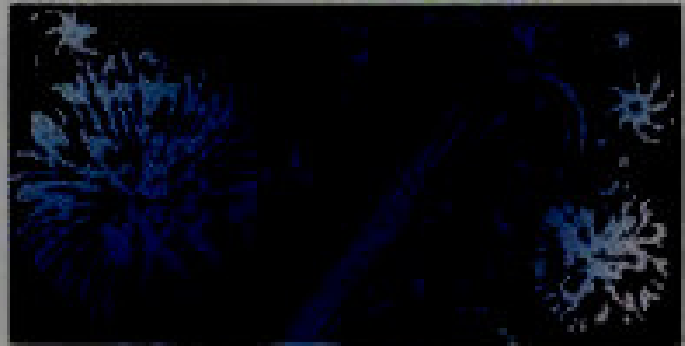
The Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language (ATESL) is a professional organization which promotes the highest standards of teaching and English language program provision for all learners in Alberta whose first language is other than English.

July - August 2004

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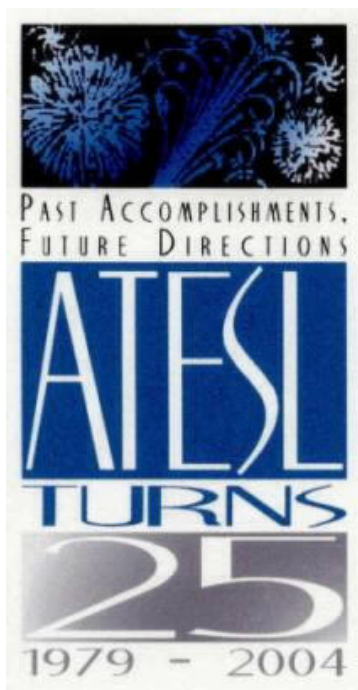
1979 - 2004

## 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



## 2004 ATESL Provincial Conference

October 22 & 23,  
Edmonton Chairpersons' Report

The 2004 ATESL Conference Planning Committee has been meeting regularly since December to prepare for the Conference. The hotel and keynote speakers have been booked, publishers have been invited, proposals for presentations and workshops are arriving, registration is underway and our web-page is up and running.

The Conference will be held at the **Coast Terrace Inn**. We are fortunate to have two prominent educators as our keynote speakers.

**Dr. Patricia Duff**, Associate Professor of Language and Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia, will be speaking on Friday. Her research interests are second language acquisition and socialization, task-based interaction, second language education, and research methods in applied linguistics. The title of Dr. Duff's talk is *Issues in Task-based Research and Teaching: Still Taking Task to Task*.

Saturday's keynote speaker, **Dr. Milton Bennett**, of the Intercultural Communication Institute in Portland, Oregon, will be speaking on developing intercultural competence. A consultant in domestic and global diversity, Dr. Bennett develops and conducts intercultural training for universities and corporations around the world.

As well as the keynote speakers, an integral part of an ATESL conference is the involvement of our members. We encourage you to share your classroom practices and insights with colleagues in a paper, demonstration, or workshop. We are also anxious to learn about research projects with which you are involved.

To learn more about the keynote speakers and the Conference, go to the ATESL 2004 Conference link on the ATESL website ([www.atesl.ca](http://www.atesl.ca)). There you will find : **\*Call for Papers\*Conference Registration Form\*Keynote Speakers: Dr. Duff and Dr. Bennett\*Accommodation: Coast Terrace Inn**

The Conference Planning Committee is looking forward to the 2004 Conference, a celebration of ATESL's 25 years. We hope to see you there.

Lorna Allen and Mary Calder

## ATESL Board Biography

### Sheri Rhodes - ATESL Secretary

Sheri Rhodes is currently the secretary on the Provincial Board of Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language and has previously served as the Calgary Local co-chair.

She has been working in the ESL field in both Korea and Canada for the past ten years. She has a B.A. from the University of Lethbridge and has previously completed the TESL Diploma program at the University of Calgary where she will be convocating with a M.Ed. TESL this fall.

She came to ESL after working in the recording industry, broadcasting, public affairs and accounting. This field has finally captured her interest long term due to the diversity of the programs and the interactions with the students.

She has experience in a variety of language programs including both business and academic English. This includes teaching, training, program and student assessment and curriculum development. Sheri is also actively involved in exploring the use of technology in language learning.

She recently joined the ranks of home owner with a very colourful townhouse and continues to fill her timetable with more than seems humanly possible.

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

## ATESL BOARD 2003-2004

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## What's your program worth to your community?

When cities and communities talk about the industries that contribute to their economy, rarely is education mentioned. That's because traditionally, education and business have been seen as two distinct sectors. But we know that like it or not, the model is changing. Private language schools, business colleges and technical training institutes - just to name a few types of educational institutions -- receive little to no money in government. They must operate like a business in order to keep their doors open. At the same time, they are always under the microscope when it comes to the quality of their programs, as often they are harshly scrutinized by their peers in more traditional programs that are funded, at least in part, by the government.

Nowadays those traditional programs are prodded to recovery costs, or even to generate revenue. The traditional schools can learn a lot from the private schools when it comes to operating, budgeting and forecasting.

What both types of schools have in common, I believe, is that generally they are disregarded, however unintentionally, by business and even political or governing bodies when it comes to being seen as a force that contributes significant money to the community of which they are a part. In some cases, language programs housed at large post-secondary institutions are sometimes shunned by the same senior administrators or administrative committees that challenge them to be financially self-sufficient, while the business and science faculties never worry about such matters. I believe that part of the reason is that we ourselves do not view what we do as business, and as a result, we don't always recognize the value that we contribute to our own communities.

I would suggest that language schools and programs today are in a unique position. The reality is that we are being asked to recruit more students, generate revenue and be self-sustaining. At the same time, we must maintain the highest of academic standards. We are both educators and business people. And sometimes it seems the rest of the world simply has not caught up when it comes to respecting the work that we do and the reality of our business. Before we can ask others to do this, we must do it for ourselves.

Last August I was interviewed on the local TV news about the effect that the war in Iraq, SARS, mad cow disease and West Nile Virus had on language school enrollments in our city. Before the interview, I did some basic research about language schools in my community and I was surprised by the results. I found out that the decrease in student enrollment due to these events could have a significant economic impact.

Let me say now that these estimates are my own calculations, based on my knowledge of the local market and experience working in the industry in this city. Here are what my estimates showed:

Information and research about language schools in Calgary, Alberta, Canada

- ◆ There are about 50 language schools and programs in and around Calgary. This includes private schools, programs at post-secondary institutions and other programs. It does not include private tutors or home-based language classes.

- ◆ Most foreign students who come here to study English are from Japan, Korea, Mexico and Taiwan. Many come in groups and are recruited by agents.

- ◆ In summer, about 1500 foreign students are in Calgary each month to study English. Schools are not required to release enrollment data and I have based this number on my knowledge of the language study industry in Calgary. But if you take 50 language schools and divide it by 1500 students, you can easily see that this is a conservative estimate of 30 students per school, per month. Most schools will have many more than that number and others will have just a few.

- ◆ In the remaining months, that drops to about 750 students per month. This is also a very conservative average of 15 students per school, per month.

I used conservative numbers on purpose, so as not to artificially inflate the numbers generated in the next portion of the research - the economic impact of language students studying in our city:

- ◆ Each student will spend approximately \$2500 per month during their stay:

- ◆ \$1000 tuition and books for a full-time pro-

gram of 25 hours per week (includes examinations and other supplies.)

- ◆ \$750 homestay / accommodation and food
- ◆ \$750 travel, entertainment and shopping (about \$187.50 per week, including transit fares, excursions to local attractions, dinners out, visits to local bars, movies, museums, activities, summer festivals, souvenirs, day trips out of town, etc.)

Using these numbers, we can estimate that foreign students add \$3,750,000 to Calgary's economy each month during the summer (July and August) and another \$1,875,000 during each of the other ten months of the year. **That's a grand total of \$26,250,000 we can estimate that foreign students add to Calgary's economy each year when they come here to study full time in a language school.**

To add some perspective to those numbers, you'll want to remember that Calgary's population is expected to reach 1 million people sometime over the next five years. It is fairly wealthy economy which is driven by oil and gas and ranching, as well as tourism and sports, among other industries.

There are larger cities in Canada like Vancouver and Toronto. I wonder how much money that language schools generate for their economies? What does your language school or program contribute to your city's economy? What do all the language schools in your city or province contribute to its economy?

By educating ourselves on how much we contribute to our local economy, we become aware that we are inter-connected with the greater community and it benefits from our "business". In a city like Calgary where the main industry is oil and gas, \$26 million may not be much, but I can assure you that if I asked 100 people in our city how much they thought foreign language students contribute to our economy, they wouldn't even come close to guessing that much.

Who is financially affected when language school enrollment drops?

- ◆ language schools
- ◆ language teachers (Most work on contract and when there are no students, there are no jobs)

◆ local families who act as host families and get paid to billet students

- ◆ restaurants, bars, movie theatres
- ◆ tourist industry
- ◆ transit systems (bus, subway, etc.)

The next time you need to make a pitch to senior administration for more space; the next time you try to negotiate a special deal on bus passes for students at your school or the next time you have trouble arranging a group rate for your students to go to a museum, have your own estimates in hand.

Share your research with others in your community. Make a presentation at your local Chamber of Commerce, community meeting or faculty council. This will benefit you in three ways. First, you will gain publicity for your own school. Second, you will help to educate others in the community about exactly how much the language school "business" contributes to your local economy. Finally, you may start a dialogue between different stakeholders of your community about this very topic, which is even more important than simply giving them facts.

If we are going to be asked to operate and think like businesses, then we deserve the respect that is due to an industry that can contribute significant amounts of money to our local economy. Not only do we educate students, we contribute positively to the economy of our own community in the process. In fact, I would say that it is our responsibility as language school administrators and marketers to be aware of the impact we have beyond the doors of our own schools and into the greater community.

What is your language school worth? I challenge you to figure it out. I think you'll be surprised.

Happy marketing!

Sarah Elaine Eaton  
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Note: This article was adapted from a previously published article that appeared in "Language School Marketing and Recruitment e-newsletter, March 15/04", Vol. 2, Issue 6. © 2004.

# ESL PROJECTS

## Discussion Forum:

### FINAL REPORT

## ESL Outside of Edmonton and Calgary

Held January 15, 2004, Edmonton

### Proceedings

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### *I Introduction*

The Discussion Forum on *ESL Outside of Edmonton and Calgary* was hosted by NorQuest College, sponsored by Alberta Learning, and attended by 18 individuals representing the provincial and federal governments, ESL “experts”, and individuals involved directly with service delivery around the province.

The Forum had three main objectives:

- To share information on ESL needs, programs and services outside of Edmonton and Calgary.
- To discuss options for future direction.
- To brainstorm on what specific initiatives would improve current programs and services.

The day-long session included:

1. Presentations by:
  - Alberta Learning (historical context and update)
  - NorQuest College (update on the ESL Resource Package for Alberta Communities)

- Citizenship and Immigration (update on federal programs).

2. Small and large group discussion of:

- Lessons Learned and Trends
- Challenges and Opportunities
- Visioning and Visioning to Action

The evaluations and other feedback indicated the day was beneficial and productive. This report is a summary of the presentations and discussion.

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### *II. Opening Presentations*

#### **A. Carolyn Dieleman, Language Training Programs, Alberta Learning**

Carolyn spoke of the opportunity that the day provided to share information, particularly about lessons learned from past experience. Community Adult Learning Councils and the Volunteer Tutor Adult Literacy Program have a long history of providing ESL in smaller communities across Alberta.

Highlights of the history of supporting ESL (English as a Second Language) Training from Carolyn’s perspective are outlined in the table below under the headings of curriculum and materials development, training and professional development, use of technology, and research. See the table that follows for highlights.

#### **2. Lorene Anderson, Update on the ESL Resource Package for Alberta Communities**

This Resource Package is a “a guide and support for ESL teachers,” particularly those without training and background in teaching ESL, developed jointly by Bow Valley College and NorQuest College, and funded by Alberta Learning. Referenced to the Canadian Language Benchmarks, this package provides a curriculum, principles of good practice, lesson planning information, effective instructional techniques, assessment strategies, and resources available.

Six communities outside of Edmonton and Calgary are currently receiving support for using the resource package. The resource provides information, tools and ideas to address specific challenges identified by instructors in communities outside of Edmonton and Calgary, including ESL literacy, pronunciation, ESL for the workplace, and multi-level classroom teaching.

A needs assessment tool, currently in the pilot phase, is expected to be available by June, 2004, following completion of pilot projects.

Other materials discussed were the *ESL in a Box* developed in Saskatchewan, and the *ESL Traveling Suitcase* available from Literacy Alberta (which comes with a facilitator).

**Table: Highlights from Carolyn Dieleman’s presentation on historical context.**

<b>Area of work</b>	<b>Past initiative</b>	<b>Planned or underway</b>	<b>Lessons Learned in this area</b>
<b>Curriculum and materials development</b>	Open access curriculum (for drop-in learners)	Private organizations are developing and marketing their products.	Materials are more likely to be applied when ongoing training support is provided. Limited usage of materials attributed to “only one exposure”.
	ESL/Literacy and Parenting Skills project		
	Materials for implementing Canadian Language Benchmarks		
	ESL Resource Package for Alberta Communities (ERPAC)		
	CLB/LINC materials		
<b>Training; professional development</b>	Canadian Language Benchmarks training	Workshops to support ERPAC and other specialized needs such as ESL Literacy, Pronunciation, ESL for the workplace	Limited adoption of specific approaches attributed to subject complexity, and the need for ongoing and repeated support.
	Mentoring for ESL instruction provided in Brooks, Taber and Two Hills.		
	Literacy Alberta has provided workshops for ESL tutors.		
<b>Use of Technology</b>	L.E.A.D. - - Delivery of ESL online (Dr. Ho and NorQuest College).	Supernet may address technology limitations.	Hardware and software limitations are a factor.
	ATESL Study on the use of technology.	Calg Bd. of Edu. initiative combines technology and facilitation; a proposal for local training is under consideration.	Technology plus facilitation appears to work best. Increased use of technology still promising.
<b>Research</b>	Research on the literacy needs of Albertans outside of Edmonton and Calgary.		ESL learners are an increasing portion of Volunteer Tutor Literacy Program.  ESL and literacy domains converge in smaller communities.

### 3. Gayle Taylor, Citizenship and Immigration

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) has encouraged the sponsorship of refugees to rural communities. To support newcomers' settlement in selected smaller northern Alberta communities, NorQuest College provides language training services under a project called the Rural Delivery Program. This Program is funded through the federal Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) Program, and has operated since 1996. A facilitator builds the capacity of the community to meet ESL and other settlement needs, often working with Community Adult Learning Councils. Currently, six northern Alberta communities are accessing this program.

CIC has also been active in funding the development and provision of materials to support the Canadian Language Benchmarks, including activity books for classroom and computer lab instruction.

For the 2003 calendar year, approximately 9% of immigrants to Alberta were destined to settle in smaller communities in rural areas, and 13.5% were destined outside the cities of Edmonton and Calgary. Statistics are available on how many immigrants were destined to specific communities.

Gayle clarified that LINC is intended to address basic language training including ESL literacy needs.

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### *III. Lessons Learned from Past Practice*

#### 1. Flexibility and customization are needed to provide effective service

· Flexibility in service works well-providing training **WHEN clients can come** (on weekends, for example).

· Flexibility works in **combining volunteers and paid instructors** to meet the varied needs of individuals in a group setting-especially with a class of learners at different levels.

· Solutions need to fit the **individual circumstances of the community**, and **multiple learning levels**

#### 2. Curriculum/resources/materials need to be

#### driven by client interests and needs

· **Customizing curriculum** to each learner or group of learners works well-the subject matter and curriculum affect learner satisfaction. Learners may, for example, be **more interested in the academic than culture-based approach**, once they have been resident for a time.

· Also need **locally relevant materials**; and **local context** in the teaching.

· The work on **Canadian Language Benchmarks** and assessment has been good.

#### 3. Location and type of service is a key factor

· Need to think out of the box-how about doing ESL **outside of the classroom**, in other venues and formats?

· Also noted: A location outside-of-the-home works best for tutoring.

#### 4. Involving others in all aspects of delivery is key

· The **community network** needs to be strong to support the whole settlement of the immigrant.

· **Learner involvement** in the design and governance of the Program works well-involve them on the Board, for example.

· **The joining of literacy and ESL** resources, information, and service delivery has been a positive factor.

· **Inter-agency networks** work well.

· Developing **relationships in the community** works well-especially with ESL learner groups.

#### 5. Expertise and mentorship help

· The CIC rural program has been effective in **transferring instructional expertise**; observing instructors has been particularly effective; as has the link with the College. This service reduces the isolation effect. Mentorship-type of support is effective, such as that made available to Brooks and now six new communities.

#### 6. Stable funding allows for program development



· **Short-term funding** does not give enough time for development and growth of an initiative.

**7. Over-reliance on volunteers does not work well.**

**8. Just sending out materials and information does not work well.**

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#### ***IV. Trends***

The table below summarizes the points made about trends impacting on ESL outside of Edmonton and Calgary.

<b>Trend</b>	<b>Implication</b>
Increasing numbers of immigrants.	Ongoing need for ESL services.
More professional immigrants.	Need for higher level, work-force orientated ESL services.
Continuing ESL literacy learners.	Ongoing need to meet the needs of low literacy learners.
More workplace-based issues around ESL workers (safety, legal rights issues).	Need to engage the employer community, need to address the needs of working ESL learners.
Ongoing development of technology alternatives.	Need to develop capacity to use technology.
Volunteer burn-out.	Need to supplement/expand/modify the current reliance on volunteers.

#### ***V. Strengths and Opportunities***

The table below summarizes the points made about strengths and opportunities impacting on the future direction of ESL outside of Edmonton and Calgary.

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
Combined literacy and ESL services.	Collaboration is increasing. The network is growing; this is valuable for sharing expertise.
Discussion forum such as this.	Public awareness of ESL and related issues is increasing-with industry, professional associations and credentialing bodies.
Pilot projects-can be built on.	More ESL learners, and more funding, provides an opportunity for better programming.
Availability of standards, best practices, Canadian resources. Overall, good resources are available.	Will the aging population result in more available volunteers?  Opportunity to work more with employers.  More employability programming that can be accessed by ESL learners.  Committed volunteers.

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## **VI. Challenges**

The following summarizes the points made about challenges currently affecting the delivery of ESL services.

### **1. Identifying and meeting diverse needs.**

- Meeting the diverse needs of the ESL population, including settlement needs.
- Identifying needs in the community and how to meet those needs can be a challenge, particularly the needs of multi-level learners.
- Meeting the needs of low-level ESL people who are working-they are isolated. Whose mandate is it? What is the role of the employer? What materials are relevant?
- Meeting the needs of people who travel to work from one community to another-under whose jurisdiction do they fall? Need coordinated approaches.
- Attracting and retaining learners can be a challenge.

### **2. Resources and support.**

- Meeting the needs of increasing numbers of ESL learners with limited paid professional time available (most Coordinator positions are funded to the part-time level only; and Programs rely on volunteers). Difficult to address increasing needs with limited resources. Twenty-hour work week and 10-month paid position for Coordinators is very limiting.
- Isolation-networking really important. Cost to travel a barrier.
- Professional development-need ongoing support, available when needed.
- Finding volunteers. Need more volunteers with more training. Good instruction requires prep time which volunteers do not necessarily have.
- Difficult to get qualified people for Boards, and for instruction.
- Need more longer-term funding to allow programs to develop over time. Need more funding for more permanent positions-full-time rather

than part-time.

### **Community engagement and collaboration.**

- Engaging the whole community, including employers and community services in meeting the settlement needs of immigrants. Need one portal that links to the community. Need to activate the community through networks.
- Capitalizing on the links between ESL and literacy-what should be the name on the door? Meeting the needs of a range of types of learners through one door-literacy and ESL.
- Developing a joint CALC and VTALS focus on ESL, with the rest of the community.

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## **VII. Suggestions**

The following suggestions for future direction were provided.

### **1. Develop an overall approach that is broad-based, holistic, and comprehensive.**

- Strategy based on three pillars: trained people, stable funding, responsive programming.
- Service provision based on an understanding of ESL as part of a broad-based community response to supporting the integration of immigrants. The whole community needs to be involved in and responsible for supporting immigrant settlement and integration. This includes provision of ESL, plain language information, professional development opportunities, mentorship, and networking at the community level. This may involve developing more welcoming and action-oriented attitudes on the part of the community, and educating communities about their ESL citizens.
- Need strong links with settlement services in the community.
- Commit to providing service to all, wherever they are.

### **2. Training and professional development.**

- Expanded training for ESL instructors-should be longer, better designed and coordinated (a layered approach was suggested). Need increased knowledge of tools relating to assessment and evaluation of progress such as “On Target” and new tools to be released this fall that are appropriate for smaller towns.

- Additional support for peer mentoring-build capacity for some to mentor others. Build on model programs in specific communities, to transfer expertise to other communities. Provide support for ongoing professional development for Coordinators, Boards.

- Need training in volunteer management.

- Consider a help desk where you could call to get questions answered. Support would be available when needed. Hot-line that would provide a research service. Could build on CLN’s on-line initiative.

- Provide supports for networking-lists, electronic connections/chat rooms.

- Develop hiring best practices, or upgrade skills of ESL instructors.

### **3. Technology development**

- Encourage wider use of technology; invest in hardware.

- Leverage other projects and use what is available.

- Consider the need for human supports for technologically based instruction.

### **4. Curriculum and materials**

- Develop a curriculum framework beyond what is currently available-including content, strategy, and methodology using a community-based approach, to meet differing needs. Include academic vs. culturally based approaches, key competencies, and how to demonstrate success.

- Implement the next step of ERPAC to increase usage across the province and develop content. Provide more hands-on opportunities to test the materials.

- Identify and address what is needed for higher-

level ESL learners. What is available and effective for materials and approaches? What online materials and distance learning opportunities are there?

- Support the provision of flexible services-when, where, and what. Need culture-based as well as academic approaches.

- Need locally relevant materials.

### **5. Activate communities**

- Recruit champions. Find an employer champion for sponsoring a workplace-oriented ESL initiative-such as Syncrude. Also need champions of ESL and related initiatives at the inter-agency level. Overall, need to involve the business community along with other community support in addressing ESL and related needs.

- Implement a marketing campaign targeted toward employers-joint between Alberta Learning, HR&E, and Community Development.

- Develop and implement strategies for attracting “unwilling” learners to improve their English.

### **Funding**

- Provide longer term funding for new initiatives.

- Need less reliance on volunteers. How?

- Need sustainable, predictable, sufficient funding base.

- Need to move toward standard, consistent program delivery-where students are learning similar things, instructors use similar approaches, lesson plans are similar, accountability to common standards; however, also need local variation depending on the specific needs.

### **Forum Comments**

- It is great to get different perspectives.

- I enjoyed hearing new voices and meeting new people.

- We certainly came up with ideas and were consequently energized.

- This was excellent--hopefully not a one time

thing.

- Everything went well. Great value in this type of workshop.
- Excellent session - it all worked very well.
- Opportunities are exciting--hope they will be realized.
- The breadth of ideas was most satisfying.
- The day was a great learning experience as I am just beginning to work in that area. Thank you for the opportunity to learn.
- Learned the common ESL issues and concerns throughout the province.
- Some great ideas for the future and it seems everyone is in the same path.
- This was very informative and interesting. A good comprehensive agenda and a good mix of participants.
- Great session - learned so much.
- We need to follow through with some action steps: Networking with team through list of contacts provided by facilitator; development of actions pursuant to brainstorming sessions today.
- Great day!

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### **Fast Track Course for ESL Foreign Trained Health Professionals: re-entering as Practical Nurses**

**Anna De Luca  
NorQuest College  
Language Training**

The Practical Nurse Re-Entry Program for International Students at NorQuest college assists foreign trained health professionals to fast track into the Canadian health care workplace. Currently, there are 25 immigrants at various stages of the program. Immigrants choose this NorQuest program for a number of reasons: the coordinator of the program will assess academic credentials (Prior Learning and Assessment Recognition) and may give credit for certain courses; the applicants may challenge up to 11 of

the program's 16 courses over a period of 4 months, and all challengers are provided with a challenge preparation guide; the program offers distance learning and continuous intake, and can be completed - after the challenge period - within 12 months, with most completing the program much faster. While the courses are distance, there are skills workshops that students may attend, and a required instructor-led practicum.

Currently, the ESL department at NorQuest College is working with the coordinator of this re-entry program to develop an ESL course to complement the content courses in the Practical Nurse Training Programs. Tentatively called "English for Nursing Practice," the course will address linguistic and cultural gaps in the re-entry program specific to the foreign trained students. The course will help students develop the language and cultural knowledge necessary to succeed in the workplace, once employed as Licensed Practical Nurses. The project is presently in the development phase. The course is expected to be ready to be piloted in January 2005.

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### **Integrated Career Skills / ESL Training Pilot:**

#### **Computer Repair Technician / ESL Program**

**Public Report**

**December 2003**

**Bow Valley College**

### **Funding Provided by: Alberta Learning, Language Training Programs**

This Integrated Career Repair Technician/ESL Training Pilot was offered to assess the efficacy of the model to integrate technical skills with ESL to provide training leading to employment for immigrants wishing to pursue careers related to education and experience gained in their home

countries. Specifically learners were to be provided the opportunity to acquire A+ Certification, improve their English language skills and obtain Canadian work experience leading to employment.

### **Program Objectives**

- Pilot a model for delivering Integrated Training in a technical field as proposed by Alberta Human Resources and Employment.
- Develop the learners' contextualized English language skills related to computer repair employment opportunities. The learners will develop their English proficiency to the level they can successfully master the Computer Repair Technician training and function effectively in the workplace.
- Provide learners with the technical training to become A+ Certified Computer Technicians as recognized by the Computing Technology Industry Association. Graduates of the program will find work in various industries requiring computer repair technicians.

As proposed the Computer Repair - ESL Certificate Program was offered by Bow Valley College as a full-time, thirty-six week program from January 13 to September 26, 2003. A total of seventeen students were registered in the program. The first thirty-two weeks of the program covered the technical training, employability/customer service skills and ESL instruction through lab and classroom based instruction followed by four weeks of work experience.

A thorough application and acceptance process was put in place to ensure that learners accepted into the program were qualified. The initial phase of the assessment process included a review of the applicant's Canadian Language Benchmarks and educational and employment background. Students also went through a Bow Valley College assessment phase. They wrote the TABE, a math test if necessary, and participated in a personal interview.

The program started on January 13<sup>th</sup>, and the first activity was a welcome and orientation to the Computer Repair - ESL program. At this time students were presented with a program handbook that detailed, among other items, program learning outcomes, the grading scale, relevant college policies, performance expectations, and

information on college services. They were also issued with a program description. The program consisted of the following courses:

- Program Related ESL (integrated throughout the program)
- Introduction to Computers / Keyboarding
- MS Word
- MS Excel
- MS Access
- MS Outlook
- MS PowerPoint
- Effective Use of the Internet
- Troubleshooting and Maintaining Computer Hardware
- Operating Environments: Windows
- Troubleshooting Windows Operating Systems
- Technical Client Care
- Computer Hardware
- Introduction to Networking
- Command Line Interfaces
- Interpersonal Communication Skills and Teamwork
- Career Advancement Skills
- Industry Field Placement

The final course of the program was the industry field placement. All students were found suitable placements. Employer comments were consistently positive and students were universally in agreement that the industry field placement was a valuable component of the program.

Students have been trained to A+ Certification standards and will be eligible to write the exams after the required period of employment in the industry has been completed.

Attendance in the program was excellent. Most students had 100% attendance in any given month.

Student feedback and an assessment of their satisfaction is always important information to collect. A perception check on progress of the program to date was carried out at the end of March to provide formative direction for the program staff. At that time the consensus was that the program was working well for all the students and comments regarding the instructors were all positive. Further perception checks were conducted in July and August. The ratings were universally positive and the comments were positive and helpful.

*Evaluation of the Integrated Technical Career*

### *Skills / ESL Model as an effective and efficient approach to skills training for learners with a language barrier*

The applicants to this program were typical of many immigrants in Calgary. They were either unemployed or underemployed. Their qualifications from their home countries would lead them to expect to be able to work in jobs that exceeded their current circumstances. A program such as this was highly attractive to these learners who wished to combine specific occupational training while at the same time getting the language support related to the training that they felt they needed in order to be successful.

In this pilot it was decided to integrate the ESL support for the duration of the program and provide one day a week of ESL related to the other courses that were in progress. This strategy was used in the belief that that specific ESL and employability skills are developed more fully when integrated with contextualized skill training. It was also felt that learner motivation would be better supported if the occupational skill training were commenced at the start of the program. An evaluation of the integration strategy used in this program in comparison with that used in another, which was offered simultaneously, where the ESL component was delivered at the start of the program was conducted.

As the ESL training in the Computer Repair - ESL Program was being offered on an ongoing basis, it was possible to tailor it to the current needs of the students and respond to particular issues or difficulties that were presented. There was regular consultation between technical, employability and ESL instructors to ensure that there was strong communication around needs, both to assist the ESL instructor in providing timely interventions and for the ESL instructor to assist the other instructors in strategies that might enhance their teaching of ESL learners. Hence the ESL instruction did not follow a pre-determined course outline but was directly linked to what was being taught in the technical courses and responded to real time learning needs. It was of considerable value that the ESL instructor has a very strong and current technical background.

The evaluation that we conducted comparing providing ESL training at the start of the program with training offered throughout the program did not provide evidence to make a strong

case for either strategy as a preference. It appeared that the method of ESL integration had little impact on the learner success in courses. The important piece was to provide ESL support. Learners expressed different views on how they would like to see ESL integrated into their program. Many learners did express gratitude for the opportunity to study in an ESL integrated program. Personal preference was clearly a strong factor here.

The benchmarks of the program participants ranged between CLB 6 - 8 upon entry and CLB 6 - 8 upon exit. Sixty per cent of learners did improve their CLB's in one strand over the duration of the program. It is our belief that the integrated approach that was taken was effective. All of the students who completed the program were successful and obtained a BVC certificate.

### *Anticipated recognition by Alberta Human Resources and Employment of the Integrated Technical Career Skills / ESL Model as an approved form of Integrated Training.*

In the fall of 2003, Alberta Human Resources and Employment asked for proposals for Integrated Training Programs. At that time, the College submitted a very comprehensive proposal for a Computer Repair ESL Integrated Training program. The labor market information regarding employment prospects in the IT field were seen as favorable, and employment statistics for the past three Computer Technician Program cohorts also confirmed good employment prospects (CTC cohorts were used since there were no Computer Repair ESL statistics available as the students had not yet completed the program at the time of submission of the proposal). However, the proposal was rejected by AHRE in November 2003 on the grounds that employment prospects for the IT sector were not seen as favorable, and also that the Computer Repair occupational cluster fell into the NOC B category whereas Integrated Training was ideally intended for NOC C and D categories.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

1. The Program should be designated as an approved program through Skills Development so that students would be eligible for student grants.
2. The Program should be approved by EI so that support would continue while students are in the program.

3. Consideration should be given to determining the best start date; one that ensures the optimum time of year for the practicum portion of the program

4. A Business Communication course should be added to the curriculum

The format of integration of the ESL component throughout the program proved to be very effective and beneficial to the students. The program length of 36 weeks should be maintained.

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## **Language Training Programs Final Report 2003/2004**

### **“Communicative Competence - From Comprehension to Production”**

#### **Calgary Immigrant Educational Society**

#### **Public Report Submitted to Alberta Learning**

The objectives of “Communicative Competence - From Comprehension to Production” were met for the 2003 - 2004 year. Students were provided with a framework in which to learn and utilize the English language. Adaptation and integration skills were developed through the use of various subjects that reflected daily living and employability skills.

During the 2003 -2004 year, 312 students were registered in the ESL Drop-In program. Students were recruited through cooperation with other agencies, advertisements in community newsletters, and the distribution of brochures in various locations across the city. The reputation of the classes has also spread by word of mouth. A great deal of clients entered the program after hearing positive feedback from former or present students. Displays during the Calgary Stampede and other fairs or functions also provided a good marketing opportunity.

During the 2003 - 2004 year, a total of six classes per week were offered Mondays through Thursdays. Three different levels of classroom instruction were offered, both during the afternoons and in the evenings. These included Pre-Basic, Basic, and Intermediate/Advanced classes.

All the strands of communicative competence were taught: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. These competencies were taught in relation to practical life and employability skills. These skills are grouped under the following seven themes:

I. Consumer Skills - Banking, Shopping and Money

II. Living in Alberta and Canada -Understanding a New Place

III. My Family and Me - Understanding and Expressing the Person

IV. Employment

V. Transportation

VI. Health and Wellness

VII. Housing

Adult immigrants come to our Drop - In Program for various reasons. Many cite a desire to be better able to communicate with their Canadian born children and their children’s teachers. Many want to improve their employability prospects while others wish to improve their English skills before pursuing further education. The common thread between all students, however, is the desire to improve their comprehension, speaking, reading and writing skills so that they may better integrate into Canadian society.

The Open access/intake drop - in format of the program accommodates adult learners who must fit classes around their work schedules or their childcare needs. A four-month membership card allows them to access the program whenever they wish during a typical week, for up to four classes per week. The program provides a service to a segment of the population that is unable to attend classes offered by other institutions. Some clients may not fit the entrance criteria of other services due to their immigration status and/or their length of residence in Canada. Still others may not be able to afford registration fees at other non-subsidized institutions. These clients find our program affordable as well as convenient. All residents of Calgary are welcome to join our program. The majority of students come from the Northeast and the Southeast quadrants of the city. The program operates at our location in the Forest Lawn District where a large number

of new Canadians reside. Presently, there are very few organizations that provide ESL instruction in the area. Our building is located on regular scheduled bus routes and within walking distance for many newcomers.

The structure of the program allows Volunteer tutors/teachers to lead students in lessons that teach communicative competence. The program uses the Open Access Curriculum, which was prepared by Dr. Laura Ho and Dr. Esha Chaudhuri in 1997. Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development sponsored the curriculum. The objective of the curriculum is to teach communicative competence to immigrants through needs assessment and drop - in classes.

The role of the volunteer tutors has been and continues to be invaluable to this program. Each volunteer has been interviewed, trained, and supervised by the program coordinator to ensure quality of instruction for the students. During the 2003 - 2004 year, 90 volunteers have spent a total of 3135 hours in the classroom. Each volunteer makes a commitment to teach a minimum of one class per week. The classes are two and a half hours in duration.

The objectives of "Communicative Competence - From Comprehension to Production" were met this year. Students increased their English speaking abilities. Because of these improved abilities, confidence levels amongst the students increased as well. This will be beneficial to them as they become increasingly active participants in Canadian society.

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## **SAM CLB 1-4**

### **Summative Assessment Manual Learner Benchmark Achievement Report Tools**

#### **FINAL PUBLIC REPORT**

**March 2004, Edmonton**

##### **Submitted to:**

Carolyn Dieleman  
Language Training Programs  
Alberta Learning

Pauline McNaughton  
Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks  
Gayle Taylor  
Citizenship & Immigration Canada  
Edmonton

##### **Submitted by:**

G.P. Smith Consulting Inc.  
Edmonton

Work has been completed on SAM (Summative Assessment Manual) for Canadian Language Benchmarks Stage 1, a project funded by Alberta Learning, the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, and by Citizenship and Immigration Canada in Edmonton. At the moment, the SAM CLB 1-4 manual is in the pre-publication production phase.

##### **Project outline**

SAM: Summative Assessment Manual is for the use of ESL teachers in publicly funded adult ESL programs. The purpose of SAM is to help teachers assess their students on the achievement of selected Canadian Language Benchmarks standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing at the conclusion of an agreed period of language instruction, e.g. a session. The SAM manual consists of four main parts:

1. Planning the summative assessment - deciding on the assessment strategy
2. Conducting the assessments: SAM tasks (contains 156 tasks)
3. Rating the learners' performance (guidance, examples, references, rating aids)
4. Reporting the results (standard benchmark achievement reporting forms) SAM comes in two volumes: SAM CLB 1-2, and SAM CLB 3-4.

##### **Project description**

SAM is based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000 framework, standards and related curricula, and offers clarity of assessment of speaking, listening, reading and writing as separate skills. SAM is intended for measuring **student achievement** in the classroom- **after** students have been exposed to thematically and functionally related learning materials and language **instruction**. SAM is performance-based



and standard-based: it compares student performance with a set of predefined criteria, and **not** with how other students in the class perform.

SAM offers a large pool of 156 “exit” assessment tasks in four parallel sets available to the teacher for CLB levels 1-4. The tasks incorporate relevant contemporary everyday topics to suit the communication assessment needs of Stage I proficiency learners in four universal themes: Food & Nutrition; Home & Community; Health & Safety; and Work.

SAM is learner and context-sensitive; it is flexible and adaptable to the needs of almost any adult ESL program in Canada. It offers multiple combinations of tasks to best match CLB-based specific classroom instruction and expected student learning.

Assessment tasks at each CLB level include **formal tasks** (task security and stringent protocol considerations apply) and **informal tasks** (**in-class observation tasks** with prior student preparation and **portfolio tasks** that students complete on their own time). The teacher chooses a formal or informal assessment strategy, depending on certain characteristics of the program and / or the learners, as described in SAM (Part I: Planning the Summative Assessment). The inclusion of the informal assessment tasks in SAM makes it a flexible and adaptable assessment system that can be used by both very formal and structured main stream ESL programs as well as by the less structured, more community-oriented programs.

Both the formal and informal assessment tasks (class observation or portfolio tasks) have user-friendly rating scales, marking schemes, and student performance samples to assist the teacher in the marking and scoring.

### **Project development process**

The development of SAM followed several stages, such as developing the prototype, writing the tasks, the pre-pilot and pilot, marking, tabulating and analyzing of the data, and development of the final version. The first pilot tested the prototype as well as the specifics of the tasks. The findings were applied to the development of the remaining parts of the manual. The SAM tasks were written by following rigorous CLB 2000 specifications and CLB curriculum objectives in the SAM theme areas, then vetted

and edited by the writing team, and trialed in ESL classes, before being sent to the piloting sites.

The pre-pilot was conducted in three ESL programs in Edmonton, followed by a larger pilot conducted in Edmonton, Windsor (Ontario), and Winnipeg. The following ESL programs participated: NorQuest College (Edmonton), Edmonton Catholic School District, Sacred Heart School, Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, Mason Centre for Adult Education, Windsor, Ontario Herman Centre for Adult Education, Windsor, Ontario Applied Linguistics Centre, Winnipeg.

The pilots were conducted in some cases by the teachers of the participating programs, and in other cases by trained external pilots. In addition, a validation study was conducted at the language assessment centre in Calgary (ILVARC), with a few additional samples from the language assessment centre in Edmonton (LARCC).

40 teachers and assessors, and over 350 ESL learners participated in the SAM pilots. Close to 3,000 student samples of SAM tasks were collected and analysed for the SAM pilot and validation studies. The pilots produced sufficient empirical data to confirm the validity and appropriacy of the overall design of SAM, and to improve the final version of all the piloted material and all the assessment tasks in the SAM manual. The participating teachers, assessors, and the students provided general and / or specific feedback to the SAM material, including the cultural appropriateness feedback. The input was sought through a questionnaire, and through direct elicitation of oral and written comments about the material and the process.

The major focus of the validation of the SAM pilot data was incorporated in the following question: “Are Sam tasks congruent with the appropriate Benchmarks competency ranges, and appropriate for the intended class levels in content, difficulty and congruence with the curriculum?” The question was examined through a variety of angles:

- a construct validity analysis, examining the closeness of SAM design with the CLB 2000 framework, standards and the related curricula
- the opinions of the teachers and the students in the pilot (face validity)

- a statistical inquiry / analysis of the pilot results in the task samples
- criterion-relatedness analysis, i.e. by comparing student results on the SAM tasks with their current CLBPT or CLBA benchmark results in the same skill.

### **The practicality of SAM**

Since SAM is a performance-based direct assessment, it naturally takes more time to complete than an indirect 100 - item multiple choice test would. When speaking competencies are assessed, every student has to be given an opportunity to speak for a period of time. Consequently, some teachers in the pilots were concerned with the amount of time needed to complete the SAM achievement assessments. They feared that it would be an additional burden on their time unless SAM was an integral, routine part of the program curriculum. Some teachers suggested reducing the number of items in the tasks, and the number of tasks themselves. Some reductions had been planned for by the developer and occurred due to a number of items not producing the required statistical properties in the pilot, but the field-testing did not point to the desirability of any substantial cuts and structural changes to the original SAM tasks design.

In the experience of the external piloters the full formal SAM assessment for a class of 15-20 students, including one-one-one interviews and the marking of the writing tasks can be accomplished in 2 to 3 school days, or can be spread to fit a more relaxed assessment schedule. A choice of mixed assessment (formal and informal tasks) or of informal assessment only would considerably reduce the time requirements by fifty percent or more. Such an assessment would be conducted every three to six months. In return for the invested assessment time, every SAM user (instructors and students alike) will gain important information about specific outcomes in language performance in view of the CLB standards. The project developers and field-testers conclude that the SAM system will be reasonably practical, when the assessment is:

- planned ahead of time, as suggested in the manual
- a regular part of the program and curriculum
- accessible to every teacher

- familiar to every teacher

### **Format**

The SAM manual features locator tabs and colour-coded material for speedy navigation. The formal task assessment records are white; student handouts to prepare for classroom observation tasks are pale yellow; student portfolio tasks are pale blue; teacher's answer and rating keys are pink. All the tasks are photocopiable. The SAM CLB 4 listening tasks ( formal and informal) are recorded on a CD, which comes with the SAM CLB 3-4 volume. Included in each volume are also standard benchmark achievement report forms: 2 basic forms, and several additional optional forms that the program or the teacher may choose from if useful for their purposes.

### **Important exclusions**

SAM is not to be used for assessing literacy students, for placement purposes or general proficiency testing, or for assessing student progress without prior instruction in the theme(s) / topic(s) of the chosen SAM assessment tasks.

### **Conclusion**

In designing and developing SAM, every care was taken to make the SAM system teacher-friendly and student-friendly. When published, SAM is expected to be a helpful addition to the toolbox for instructors in adult ESL programs. It is hoped to have a positive washback effect - in promoting and encouraging the communicative teaching in the classroom of the competencies in the CLB 2000 standards in many ESL programs, and in bridging any gaps in CLB outcomes among programs and among their students. It may also likely increase the student awareness of the CLB standards and goals, and may motivate a more focused study and practice of specific competencies and abilities described as standards in the Canadian Language Benchmarks.

### **A sample of general teacher comments:**

- *The decision trees are really excellent and really help. The planning form is really excellent too.*
- *I like the decision tree - very flexible range of choices - seems to cover our range.*
- *They (the tasks) all look very interesting...I*

would feel comfortable using SAM as an assessment tool.

- I like how SAM assesses all the 4 skill areas.
- I like checking detailed performance criteria in the tasks.
- I like the color coding.
- I like the idea of class observation tasks.
- The informal tasks worked really well - I like the idea.
- We have to make sure that it (SAM assessments) is not even more work for the teachers.
- The scoring system is explained well. I really like the scored samples of student work.
- I really like the performance samples that have been included - very helpful when it comes to marking the test.
- Very clear.

#### **Additional comments about reporting forms:**

- I think information about placement adjustment by the teacher in the form is good to have.
- Keeping track of students' placement and achievement records in the forms is very useful - it's important information for the teacher.

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## **ATESL Bursary**

The ATESL Professional Development /Bursary committee would like to invite interested ATESL members to consider making an application to the committee for a bursary to help you participate in professional development opportunities that are consistent with generally accepted principles of adult learning and with currently understood principles of second language learning and teaching.

### **The criteria for bursary applications are the following:**

1. The applicant shall be a current, paid member

of ATESL for the last 2 years.

2. The applicant shall fill out the official application form found on the ATESL website ([www.atesl.ca](http://www.atesl.ca)).
3. The applicant shall submit a written evaluation of the event or program of studies upon completion thereof.
4. Candidates shall demonstrate in their application the appropriateness of the proposed event or course of studies. Priority will be given to applicants who also demonstrate need.
5. It is assumed that candidates shall return to Alberta to work following their course of studies.
6. A letter of acknowledgement that the bursary application has been received will be sent.

### **How to apply:**

Ø Fill out the application form found in the Bursary section of the ATESL website and e-mail the ATESL Professional Development Committee in care of [info@atesl.ca](mailto:info@atesl.ca)

Ø The application form asks for a summary of the professional development activity and how it would enhance your work as an ESL professional. Please refer to the Bursary section of the website for more information.

Bursary awards have been \$200 per applicant, however each applicant's application will be considered on a case by case basis.

The deadline for applications is September 30, 2004.

The ATESL board would like to encourage and support the professional development of it's members. We hope that you would strongly consider how this opportunity could develop your professional capacity as an educator in the field of ESL.

We look forward to your applications!

Maria MacMinn  
ATESL Past President

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## NOMINATIONS - ATESL Board of Directors

The ATESL Recruitment Committee would like to put out a call to members to recruit for nominations for the following elected positions this year:

### NOMINATIONS FOR ATESL BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2004-2005

In accordance with the by-laws of ATESL, we invite nominations for the following positions on the ATESL Board of Directors:

- \* President-Elect (3-year term)
- \* Secretary (1-year term)
- \* Treasurer (1-year term)

For information about the roles of each of these positions, please go the ATESL website.

The election will be held at the annual general meeting in Edmonton on October 23, 2004.  
**Only members in good standing are eligible to make nominations.**

#### 1. POSITION: President Elect

Name of Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Nominator: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2. POSITION: Secretary

Name of Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Nominator: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 3. POSITION: Treasurer

Name of Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Nominator: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Submit nominations by post to: ATESL Nominations, c/o 6-102 Education North, University of Alberta, Edmonton, T6G 2G5 **OR** by fax: (780) 488-4369 **OR** by email to [info@atesl.ca](mailto:info@atesl.ca) .

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# TESL CANADA FEDERATION

**Here's an exciting opportunity to sit on a TESL Canada Committee and contribute to your profession.**



## **TESL Canada Certification Committee**

TESL Canada is looking for volunteers to sit on this very important committee.

### **The committee will perform such duties as:**

- receiving and replying to feedback from the membership;
- assisting the Professional Certification Adjudicator in evaluating criteria for certification;
- recommending policy;
- collaborating with the Teacher Training Program Advisory Committee.

### **The criteria for membership on the Professional Certification Committee is:**

- Undergraduate or advanced degree in TESL or related field
- Five years teaching or supervisory experience in an adult ESL program
- TESL credential from a TESL Canada recognized teacher training program or equivalent
- An interest in TESL professional standards
- An active member of a professional community with a proven ability to interact with a diverse range of ESL educators
- Two letters of support.
- Member in good standing of TESL Canada

If you are interested in being on this committee please contact the TESL Canada office at [admin@tesl.ca](mailto:admin@tesl.ca) or 1-800-393-9199 for further details or send us a letter including your resume to TESL Canada Certification Committee, P.O. Box 44105, Burnaby, B.C. V5B 4Y2

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# PROJECT ANNOUNCEMENT

## National Network for LINC/ELSA/MIIP-ESL Providers

The National Network (NN) is a national initiative undertaken by TESL Canada with funding support from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC).

**The national importance of this initiative is identified with its goal to provide opportunities for LINC/ELSA/MIIP-ESL providers, program administrators, instructors, assessors, child-minding staff and learners to share information relating to nationally comparable services, resources, research and best practices.**

Undoubtedly, to really make a long term difference in supporting the varying needs of newcomers who attend our programs, we need to have cross-Canada representation on our Advisory. We hope to hold email and face-to-face meetings with Members of the Advisory Committee to:

- ❖ Discuss the needs of our learners and how they can best be met.
- ❖ Learn more about the provision of LINC/ELSA/MIIP-ESL provider services across Canada in order to identify priorities for our national initiative.
- ❖ Inform content for the National Network newsletter and for the website accessible through the TESL Canada website [www.tesl.ca](http://www.tesl.ca).
- ❖ Plan for facilitation of National Network sessions at conferences such as TESL Ontario 2004 and TESL Canada 2005.

Currently, funding is available to bring in presenter participants and/or members of the Advisory Committee from across the country to participate in a two-hour workshop as well as a one-day, face-to-face meeting at the TESL Ontario 2004 Conference.

**Please contact the Project Manager if you are interested in being a part of this process, or, if you wish to join the Advisory Committee as a provincial representative.**

Angela Schinas  
Project Manager/National Network  
Learner Advocate/Member-at-Large  
Email: [tesleducation@yahoo.ca](mailto:tesleducation@yahoo.ca)  
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### THE ATESL NEWSLETTER

Published Quarterly

Deadlines: Feb. 15, May 15, Aug. 15, Nov. 15

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

Editor: Thomas Jiry, Ph. 1 780 463-5576

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Disclaimer: ATESL remains neutral to all content in the ATESL Newsletter