



Winter 2007

Labour Market Focused ELSA

At ISSofBC's Language College & Career Services, 2007 is starting off in a very positive way with the introduction of Labour Market Focused (LMF) ELSA for English levels 4 and 5. In a recent provincial government Request for Proposal, ISSofBC ranked as the highest proponent in all three communities in which we applied – Vancouver, Tri-Cities and Richmond.

LMF-ELSA 4-5 will allow ISSofBC to provide upper level language classes (Canadian Language Benchmarks 5 and 6) with a focus on labour market information.

This program builds on the success of our language and employment programs and a pilot ELSA 4-5 program that we offered 2 years ago in Tri-Cities and Richmond. Michelle Wong and Diane Cartwright, who were the instructors for the pilot, have recently accepted assignments in our new LMF-ELSA 4-5, along with 8 other instructors.

Diana Smolic, Ewa Karczewska, Jill Collingwood and Donna Woo have been working extremely hard, not only to hire and train new staff for this program, but also in preparing the new classrooms, scheduling instructors and registering students. The ELSA team has been supported by the Head Office's Lease Coordinator, Veronica Lee, and the Information Technology duo, Eric Zulaibar and Buddhika Pasupathinesan.

A unique feature of this new program is that it brings together the expertise of our ESL Instructors, Computer Instructors and Employment Facilitators from the 3 Career Centres and 3 Language College-ELSA sites.

"We are proud of ISSofBC's long tradition of excellence in client service [and] collaboration."

P. Woroch, Executive Director, ISSofBC

Richmond Renovations

The beginning of 2007 marks the co-location of the Richmond Career Centre with the Richmond Language College-ELSA office. ISSofBC is committed to provide "one-stop shop services" for our clients in local communities, and our newly remodeled Richmond office at 8400 Alexandra Road strengthens ISSofBC's presence in Richmond and positions us well to meet the diverse needs of immigrants in this growing community.



Richmond Night Market—Can you spot the ISSofBC staff member?

Learning in Action

A wrap-up pizza night for the second year of the Learning in Action program was held on February 1, 2007. With the support of a BC TEAL grant, this collaboration between ELSA and the HOST program provided opportunities for low level learners to practice their emerging language skills with volunteers through community activities. In addition to pairing with volunteer "hosts," the whole group participated in activities at VanDusen Gardens at Christmas as well as visited Bloedel Conservatory and Science World. The leads on this exciting new program were Jill Collingwood, Jerry Wu and Lisa Herrera. The next program starts up in April 2007.

"A Plan for the Future"

At the beginning of April 2006, a very successful all staff meeting was held involving lunch, team activities and the presentation of ISSofBC's "A Plan for the Future." Plans are already underway for our next all staff meeting early in the new fiscal year. The following is a list highlighting some of the ways in which ISSofBC's Language College & Career Services has responded to the identified "Opportunities & Directions:"

Our Opportunities & Directions	Language College & Career Services Results
New programs and services	LMF-ELSA 4-5 and BC Employment Program
New funding sources	BC Employment Program contracts with GT Hiring and WCG International
Proactive, innovative and coordinated marketing	2 nd Community Report focusing on ethnic groups and the 3 Career Centres' client, employer and program marketing
Strategic outreach activities	Career Fair at Library Square and introductory job search workshops in public venues
New service centres in clients' local communities	Co-location of Richmond's Career Centre and Language College
Connections with the employer community	Workplace-based English delivered at employers' work sites
External and internal partnerships (between divisions)	LMF-ELSA 4-5 utilizing the expertise of staff from both the Career Services and Language College divisions

BC Employment Program

2007 marks the introduction of the BC Employment Program (BCEP) at ISSofBC. Under contract with GT Hiring and WCG International, we are placing Income Assistance (welfare) clients in our International Studies courses as well as employment service workshops for clients in Vancouver, Richmond and Surrey.

The BCEP program is bringing together staff from throughout the Language College and Career Services division to provide services to immigrants in our community. Thanks to Editha Magtibay, Lourdes Hisola, Lan Tran, Damarys Purgas, Al Hendricks and the International Studies registration and instruction staff for working to make this new program an early success.



February 1st marked the graduation of the 23rd Stepping-Up class since the program began in 1995. This painting was done by one of the program's graduates.

Employer Connections

Record low unemployment and escalating skill shortages in BC are creating unique challenges for employers as well as service providers that assist jobseekers in gaining employment.

ISSofBC's Language College & Career Services is undertaking a variety of initiatives this year that are aimed at assisting employers meet their hiring and retention needs while assisting increasingly multi-barriered clients find jobs.

Some new and developing initiatives include:

- Organizing workshops to educate employers on hiring and retaining immigrant jobseekers,
- Expanding the pool of employers open to hiring clients with low English skills,
- Delivering workplace based English classes. Building on the success of classes at a medical technology company that Audrey Suchoplas delivered in 2006, we will be expanding our delivery of these classes this year.
- Collaborating with professional recruiters in placing clients in suitable jobs,
- Organizing Trade Talks on an outreach basis for select communities that show a demand for this,
- Exploring joint employer marketing strategies with International Studies that address, among others, workplace language and cultural adaptation issues for employers, while generating suitable job opportunities for clients in our Career Centres,
- Developing and strengthening linkages with sector councils representing various industries.